

THERE WILL BE A TIME NOT TOO FAR FROM NOW, WHEN YOU WILL LOOK BACK AT THIS PHASE OF YOUR LIFE AND INSTEAD OF CONDEMNING IT, YOU WILL FEEL APPRECIATION FOR IT. - ABRAHAM HICKS



ON *this* MONTH

AT GRELC

Good Friday – CENTRE CLOSED-----	10
Easter Monday – CENTRE CLOSED-----	13
Anzac Day Holiday – CENTRE CLOSED -----	- 27

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Children’s Book Day -----	2
World Autism Day -----	2
Nature Play Week -----	Mar 25-April 5
Easter -----	10 - 13
International Day of Human Flight -----	12
Baisakhi -----	13
Earth Day -----	22
ANZAC Day -----	25
Pav it Forward Day -----	28

Director News

Welcome to our April newsletter- what a crazy period it has been and still is. I hope you are all safe and keeping up with the all the information we are sending you to keep you informed on what is happening. I would like to thank you all for your cooperation as we grapple to keep our children safe. We had awesome feedback regarding vetting families before drop-off – our thermometers are yet to arrive – hopefully by next week when we start scanning children’s temperatures. If your child is unwell, please keep them at home! We are doing all these measures to keep everyone safe. Please continue to support us as you always do.

Some of you have decided to keep your children at home which is ok but when you decide to come back please let us know in advance for us to arrange adequate staffing. We are trying to put together a reading challenge on Facebook – where our community of learners will read/ tell a story and post on our page – still figuring how to do it. We will keep you posted!

Please keep safe and enjoy your Easter break





ANZAC DAY – APRIL 25

Anzac Day, 25 April, is one of Australia’s most important national occasions. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the first world war. Although this year you cannot attend your usual ANZAC day

Commemoration you can still remember those who served and died in war on operational service past and present. You can do this by simply sitting quietly and watching the sun rise, talking with your children about ANZAC day and reading books about men and women who served. **Find out more at www.awm.gov.au**

WORLD AUTISM DAY – APRIL 02

This is the 13th annual World Autism Awareness Day. The 2020 United Nations observance of the Day draws attention to issues of concern related to the transition to adulthood. **Find out more at un.org/en/events/autismday/**

ZUCCHINI SLICE



PREP 15 min | COOK 45 min | SERVES 8-10

INGREDIENTS

- 6 zucchini, *grated*
- 200 grams prosciutto, *finely chopped*
- 1 1/2 cups (185 grams) cheddar, tasty OR provolone cheese, *grated*
- 100 grams feta cheese, *crumbled*
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) basil pesto
- 1 cup (125 grams) plain self-raising flour
- salt and pepper, *to season*
- 8 eggs
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) olive oil

To Serve: sliced tomatoes and fresh basil leaves.

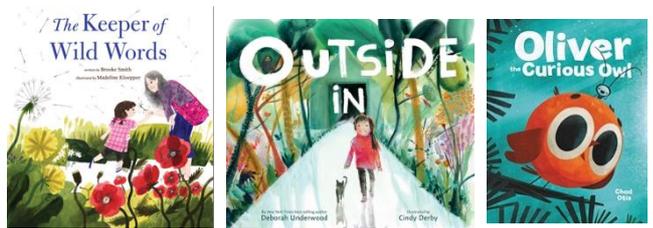
METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 180 C and lightly grease an oven proof dish. Set aside.
2. Into a very large bowl place the zucchini, prosciutto, grated cheese, feta, basil pesto, flour, salt and pepper and stir thoroughly to combine.
3. Place the eggs and oil into a separate bowl and whisk to combine.
4. Add the eggs to the zucchini mixture and stir thoroughly to combine.
5. Pour the mixture into prepared dish.
6. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until gorgeously golden and ‘set’.
7. Serve with a simple salad of sliced tomatoes and basil leaves.

Recipe and Image from ‘mylovelylittlelunchbox.com’

Book reviews

Celebrate Children’s Book Day with these beautiful recent release titles.



THE KEEPER OF WILD WORDS

BROOKE SMITH

A touching tale of a grandmother and her granddaughter exploring and cherishing the natural world.

When Mimi finds out her favourite words—simple words, like apricot, blackberry, buttercup—are disappearing from the English language, she elects her granddaughter Brook as their Keeper. And did you know? The only way to save words is to know them.

OUTSIDE IN

DEBORAH UNDERSTAND

Outside is waiting, the most patient playmate of all. The most generous friend. The most miraculous inventor.

This thought-provoking picture book poetically underscores our powerful and enduring connection with nature, not so easily obscured by lives spent indoors. Rhythmic, powerful language shows us how our world is made and the many ways Outside comes in to help and heal us, and reminds us that we are all part of a much greater universe.

OLIVER THE CURIOUS OWL

CHAD OTIS

Oliver the owl questions anything and everything in this charmingly funny story that asks who, what, when, where, and why! The only question Oliver's family ever asks is *Who? Who? Who?* But he wants to know more. When his curiosity gets the better of him, Oliver -- and his best buddy, Bug -- travel far from the safety of home to get answers about the wonderful world they live in. But after a day of exploration, how will the friends find their way back?



FOCUS: Mental Health Practices to Maintain or begin during lockdowns and isolation

As many of us are being told to hunker down in our apartments and houses, and limit trips outside and social contact, things are feeling pretty “real” at this point. Aside from the general worry people may have about their physical health as they digest the news from around the world and here at home, there’s the larger toll this is taking on our collective mental health. Here are some of the mental health practices to make sure to keep doing—or begin doing, for some of us—during the lockdown period.

Have a routine as much as you can We know how important routine is, especially for kids, under normal conditions. And when schools are closed and many people are working from home or told to stay at home, it might feel like all bets are off. But it’s actually much better for everyone’s mental health to try to keep a routine going, as much as possible. “Studies in resiliency during traumatic events encourage keeping a routine to your day,” says Deborah Serani, PsyD, professor of psychology at Adelphi University and author of “Sometimes When I’m Sad.” “This means eating meals at regular times, sleeping, waking and exercising at set times, and maintaining social (socially distant) contact. Unstructured time can create boredom, spikes in anxiety or depression, which can lead to unhealthy patterns of coping.” Another reason is that keeping a routine reduces “decision fatigue,” the overwhelm and exhaustion that can come from too many options. So in the morning, rather than wondering whether to start work or help the kids with their online learning, it’s better to know what you’re going to do—make a schedule that everyone can get on board with, and try to stick with it (as much as is possible—don’t beat yourself up if it doesn’t always work, and it’s sure not to work some days). This will free up some mental bandwidth during this time of uncertainty, which is already straining everyone’s cognitive capacities.

Start an at-home exercise routine Working out at home in these times is obviously a good way to stay healthy and kill indoor time. There are lots of options, from the 21st century ones (youtube) to the old-fashioned ones (workout videos and the dusty hand weights in your closet). Many online workout sources are offering free access or longer free trial periods during this time, which might be worth looking into. But again, anything that gets your heart pumping or builds muscle is excellent for both physical and mental health. Chris Hemsworth’s **centr.com** is offering 6 weeks FREE and **Joe Wicks The Body Coach** has a YouTube channel with lots of FREE workout videos. He is also running a PE class online for kids Monday to Friday go to his YouTube channel **The Body Coach TV**.

Get outside in nature if you can Lots of recent research finds that spending time in nature is a boost to both mental and physical health. For instance, multiple studies have found that time in green and blue space is associated with reduced anxiety and depression, and the connection may well be a causal one. Just remember to follow current government advise regarding social distancing.



Declutter your home Working on your home if you have time can be a good way to feel productive and in control. “Studies say the predictability of cleaning not only offers a sense of control in the face of uncertainty, but also offers your mind body and soul a respite from traumatic stress,” says Serani, referencing the book *Trauma-Informed Care*. Just be careful that you don’t become obsessive about cleaning, since there’s only so much you can do.

Meditate, or just breathe. Meditation has lots of research behind it, as most people by now know—it’s been shown to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, and even increase the volume of certain areas of the brain. There are lots of FREE websites and apps available, try; **Smiling Mind, Headspace, mindful, the Kinderling app, Calm.com.**

Maintain community and social connection We’re fundamentally social creatures, and during crises it’s natural to want to gather. Unfortunately, it’s the opposite of what we can do right now, so we have to be creative, to maintain both psychological closeness and a sense of community. Texting and social media are ok, but picking up the phone and talking or video conferencing, or having a safe-distance conversation on the street, is probably much better. Using video chat for kids is a great way to keep them connected with friends in a safe manner.

Let yourself off the hook This might be the most important thing to keep in mind—don’t beat yourself up when things are not going perfectly in your household. On top of everything else, being upset with yourself is totally counterproductive. If the kids watch too much Netflix or play too many hours of video games, it’s not the end of the world. Things are going to be hairy for a while, and if you can’t stick to your schedule or can’t fit in your at-home workout every day, it’s really not such a big deal in the long run. It’s much more valuable to everyone to cut yourself some slack, use the time to reflect on the important things, and try to keep a sense of “we’re all in this together” at the forefront.

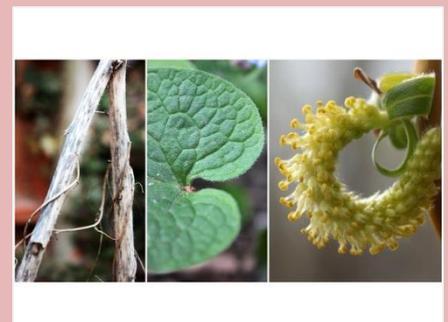
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LETTERS IN NATURE



Supplies: Marker, Card or paper.

On card or paper clearly write a letter your child knows. Go into your yard (or stay inside and look around your home) for something in nature that represents that letter. For example, see the image on the right of letters in nature, (A, B, C). Do the first few together and then allow your child to take the lead. Choose letters they know or are learning to begin with and then expand this to new letters. Discuss their sound, their shape, draw them in the air and then search for them in your surroundings. Find out more at <https://www.kiwico.com/diy/Science-Projects-for-Kids/3/project/Natures-Alphabet/2054>



HEALTH & SAFETY: Boost your child's immune system through food

Paediatrician Dr Alan Green says, "A fully functioning immune system is what keeps your children healthy." (Natural Health Magazine). The immune system is what your body uses as its defence mechanism against infectious organisms and other foreign invaders. Most of the time, the immune system does an excellent job of keeping you healthy. On occasion however, it can run into trouble which may lead to infections and illnesses. When you child's immune system seems to contract every bug that crosses their path resulting in recurrent runny noses, colds and repetitive gastro intestinal infections, it is time to take a closer look at their immune system. You don't have to accept your child's constant infections. There are many measures you can take in order to empower yourself with the right tools to boost your child's immune system. These measures can actually boost their defences as well as speed up the healing process.

It all starts with food - In order to maintain a healthy and strong immune system, fresh, real food is the key. It is important to keep packaged and processed food to a minimum. This includes crisps, chocolate, cakes and cookies. These foods should be given as an occasional treat food only. Focus on feeding your child foods such as fresh fruit and vegetables, poultry, meat, fish, whole grains, legumes, eggs and if there are no allergies, nuts and seeds can be included as well. It is also important to give your child water instead of fruit juices and cordials. Both of these are high in sugar which can be suppressive to the immune system, it can also cause inflammation and dysbiosis, amongst other things.

Maintain a healthy gut - Gut microbiota or gut flora are the complex community of microorganisms that live within your gut. These protect your digestive tract and play a role in supporting your immune system. In children as well as in adults, when the gut bacteria becomes imbalanced, your ability to fight off infections is altered and you may experience an increase in colds and flu.

Probiotics are a supplement containing live bacteria. When taken they can boost your friendly gut bacteria. A supplement containing lactobacillus, bifidobacterium and acidophilus is a good place to start. Yoghurt contains live bacteria such as these. However, the supermarket is saturated with different types of yoghurt – most of which contain mammoth amounts of sugar. Opt for plain or Greek yoghurt rather than the fruit flavoured ones which contain very concentrated sugar levels. To add some sweetness to your plain yoghurt, try a dash of maple syrup, rice syrup or fruit!

Keep calm, support your immune system - In order for your child's immune system to thrive, they need time to rest. It is important for children to have lots of down time to relax as well as opportunities for creative and imaginative play.

Sleep - Sleep plays a very important role in the healthy development of your child. It is also very important in building a strong immune system. According to the National Sleep Foundation, toddlers between the ages of 1-2 years need 11-14 hours of sleep per night, pre-schoolers between the ages of 3-5 need 11-13 hours of sleep per night and school children between the ages of 6-13 need

9-11 hours of sleep per night. In order to increase your child's quality of sleep, it is important that your child sleeps in a room that is dark. This is because the sleep hormone, melatonin, is secreted in the dark. Make sure all electronic devices are off before your put your child to bed.

Supplement to boost immune function - When your child's immune system is a bit run down and colds and flu seem never ending, there are a variety of supplements that are very supportive to the immune system. Namely, these are zinc, vitamin D, fish oils, and probiotics. For individualised advice on the dose and brand of supplement you should be giving your child, please check with your health care professional.

Immune boosting foods for kids

Garlic - One of the best ways to boost and strengthen your child's immune system is to give them garlic. This amazing food contains anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties. Garlic stimulates the immune cells and increases antibody production. It also contains the compound sulphur which has potent antioxidant properties. **TIP:** You can add garlic into your child's favourite meals such as the sauces of pasta dishes, spaghetti Bolognese. You can also add it to hummus to be used as a dip for those carrot fingers. *When adding garlic into your cooked meals, always add it at the very end. This way you don't destroy too much of the immune enhancing properties.*

Berries - Berries are one of the best sources of antioxidants and immune boosting nutrients. The beautiful and bright red, blue and purple colours get their pigment from the potent antioxidant called anthocyanin. They also contain vast amounts of vitamin A, as well as vitamin C, both of which bolster your child's immune system. **TIP:** Add a handful of mixed berries to your child's breakfast oats or morning cereal. A delicious snack idea could be a handful of mixed berries stirred through a bowl of plain yoghurt topped with a dash of maple syrup. You can even try and mix in some flaxseed meal for added nutrition.

Green leafy vegetables - Although incredibly healthy, kids just don't want to eat green leafy vegetables. Green leafy vegetables are exceptionally rich in immune boosting nutrients. One of these is iron which is important for the production of white blood cells and antibodies. Unfortunately, green leafy vegetables are not always the favourite option on your child's menu. Getting them to eat a handful of greens is often quite laughable. **TIP:** Try making a green 'Smurfie' smoothie. Throw some kale or baby spinach, frozen banana or frozen mango with your choice of milk into a blender and blend until smooth. You can add a tablespoon or two of maple syrup or rice syrup depending on the desired sweetness.

Source: <https://www.kidspot.com.au/health/early-life-nutrition/food-for-toddlers/how-to-boost-your-childs-immune-system-throuPpPppgh-food/news-story/9d982ef8a6ba0ed7754288c0bea70610>



RECYCLED CRAFT: Collect, milk bottles, cardboard rolls, bottle caps, egg cartons etc.

Having a box filled with recycled items provides an open-ended engaging activity for children. Add some masking tape and markers watch your children's imagination take over.

If you wish to create a more guided activity simply search google for 'recycled craft for kids'. There are endless ideas of what you can create with a few simple household items.





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 or staying away from friends and family where possible. So, what do you do with all that additional time?

PLAY IDEAS:

- More than likely you have a lot of toys in your home that probably haven't been played with for a while, pull these toys out. If you have empty boxes categorise them i.e. Games, stuffed animals, Blocks etc. This allows children to clearly see what is there and will make packing up much simpler.
- **Morning basket:** Create a morning routine by using a morning basket. This is a simple basket of things you gather that children can explore while you're busy in the morning. Simply choose a theme (insects, pirates, cars) and gather a range of books, toys, and activities (colouring in, puzzles, toy cars) you already own and place them in the basket. This activity may require some direction at first but with consistency children will soon get into the rhythm and enjoy the routine.

ONLINE ACTIVITY LINKS:

KIWICO – Have created blogs full of STEAM activities to engage your child in fun meaningful activities.
<https://www.kiwico.com/blog/2020/03/14/activities-for-2-4-year-olds-at-home/>

KIDSACTIVITIES.com – Find 100s of screen free activities for a wide range of age groups.
<https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/50136/ways-to-learn/>

ZOO WEBCAMS – Most Zoos around the world have webcams set up in exhibits. Go on a virtual tour of your local zoo or one in a foreign land.
<https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/g31784857/live-animal-webcam-zoo/>

AHPPC Coronavirus Statement

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has delivered a statement about COVID-19 in children and early childhood learning and care centres.

AHPPC considers ECLC are essential services and should continue at this time, but with risk mitigation measures in place. These should include:

- exclusion of unwell staff, children and visitors
- reduce mixing of children by separating cohorts (including the staggering of meal and play times)
- enhanced personal hygiene for children, staff and parents
 - make sure liquid soap and running water, or alcohol-based hand sanitiser is available at the entrance of the facility and throughout
- full adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines, in addition:
 - clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces at least daily (e.g. play gyms, tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks)
 - wash and launder play items and toys including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely
- excursions other than to local parks should be discouraged, public playground equipment should not be used
- **influenza vaccination for children, staff and parents.**

Alternative care arrangements should be considered for those children highly vulnerable to adverse outcomes should they be infected with COVID-19. AHPPC recommends parents seek medical advice for these children.



Tissue Dance

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

This is a fun game that works on posture, body control, balance and concentration. Have everyone start by placing a tissue on their heads. When the music starts playing, everyone starts dancing. But be careful; don't let the tissue fall off your head! If the tissue hits the ground, you're out.

So simple yet so much fun! Who pulls out the craziest moves to keep that tissue on their head?