Welcome

We hope you enjoy reading Issue 20 of the CTAS newsletter, please feel free to print it out and place it in your staff room for others to read.

Days of celebration during May and June

International Day of Families, 15 May: This International day looks at promoting awareness of the importance of families, and the issues that might affect them.

Sorry Day, 26 May: This is a very significant day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it also comes at the beginning of National Reconciliation Week (27 May—3 June). Sorry Day reminds us, and raises awareness, of the impact that the forcible removal policies had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families, and the community.

World Environment Day, 5 June: The theme of this year’s WED is to fight against the illegal trade in wildlife. This trade affects the biodiversity of our planet and threatens the survival of some species, including elephants, rhinos and tigers.

World Oceans Day, 8 June: This year’s theme for WOD is “Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet”, and it encourages people to promote the prevention of plastic ocean pollution. WOD has even enlisted the help of The Octonauts, you can download a free Resource Kit for your centre. The kits includes a poster, scavenger hunt, information sheet, and face painting guide for three different Octonauts characters. Find out more at http://www.worldoceansday.org/octonauts/

International Day of Yoga, 21 June: Most research into yoga and children has been done with school-aged children, but it has found that yoga can help children to deal with stress and regulate their emotions. The research suggests that yoga improves children’s physical and mental well-being, resilience and mood. There are lots of free printable yoga position cards for children available on the internet, so why not try it on the International Day of Yoga.

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Buggles Brookfield Place Project

In 2014 Buggles Brookfield Place was approached to create an outdoor scaffold to go in Brookfield Place for 6 weeks, the artwork was to be 9m x 2m. The scaffold was in place due to the building of Tower 2 in the precinct. A local artist Samantha Hughes was invited to be a part of the project as well.

Sandra, the Centre Manager at Brookfield Place, met with all the stakeholders to discuss the project, it’s purpose, the focus for the children, and the possible journey. Parents were informed by letter of the project, and kept up to date via newsletters and conversations with educators.

The theme for the children was to be “what does the wall want?” The starting point was to develop the concept of dreams and wishes and that it may not just be people that wish. Along the way visual representations, children’s observations, children’s thoughts, photos and documentation were recorded.

Children were taken on discovery trips to the site at various times during the project, they noticed the sights (birds, numbers on buildings, talked about the construction lift going up and down, the people), the construction noises (like a “crocodile”, like a “dinosaur walking”, “musical machines”), and the community “we park the car there”. When seeing the sparks from a welder for the first time, children likened it to “fireworks”.

The children’s discussions and drawing of cranes lead to an educator bringing in recycled materials from REMida, to build a crane.

Around this time Arts Brookfield had an installation of street pianos which the children had noticed and were able to go out and play. This lead to the discussion of the buildings being the “piano buildings”. The children noticed the moon moving in the sky one afternoon around the “piano buildings”, this lead to extended discussions about the moon. The concept of a “Moon Child” was developed by the children, and a story was written about this child by the children in the room. The discussion about the moon lead to families tracking the moon using photos and drawings.

The children’s artwork over this time was up scaled using overhead projectors, and the children had the opportunity to make their art even larger in the form of the finished art piece. The children at this point understood that their art would go on display for all to see in Brookfield Place. The drawings and the story came about at the same time as they were working on all aspects of the project.

The building, and the children’s interest, continued through 2015 and now that the tower has just recently opened, interest has increased again with the next group of children. Buggles Brookfield Place are hoping to have another project starting soon.

Thanks to Sandra Barr and the educators at Buggles Brookfield Place for allowing us to share their story.
Myth: Can you catch a cold from cold weather?

No, colds are caused by viruses. You can not get a cold or flu from being outside in cold weather. In fact being in closed setting such as childcare rooms may help to spread the germs.

Often we stay inside more during the winter time because we think that if the children become cold they are more likely to catch a cold, but it is a great idea to encourage the children to put their warm clothes and shoes on and go outside for the fresh air, vitamin D, and a bit of exercise. They could even bring gumboots and a rain jacket to wear outside.

Frequent hand washing will decrease the spread of germs, not keeping children inside in cold weather.

Want more training?

What’s coming up in PD?

The July-November CTAS Professional Development Calendar will be out very soon, keep an eye out for the email. It will have a good mix of old favourites and new topics. If you have any specific areas within your service that you have identified as needing training, please contact our PD Team and they may be able to create a personalised workshop for your service. If you have Long Day Care Professional Development Programme (LDCPDP) funding to use, you can use it for our PD.

Creativity, Wed 18 May

This fun and hands-on workshop looks at understanding the importance of creative thinking and how to encourage it in children, exploring open-ended play to encourage creative thinking, discovering the difference between art and craft, and investigating practical ways of enhancing creativity in child and adult instigated ways.

Team Building, 8 June

This session explores team collaboration and how to recognise each other’s roles and communicate effectively. It delves into opportunities for team building and strategies for creating a supportive team. It will cover a brief overview of conflict resolution.

Drama, Dance and Music, 22 June

Do you enjoy doing role-playing, dancing and music with the children in your room, or does it make you nervous? This session looks at the importance of drama, dance and music in the early years, and how to embed these into your planning and curriculum, everyday play, and environment set up. So whether you are just starting out, or need some new ideas, this workshop is for you!

For the full professional development calendar or to book into sessions, please email pdtraining@ctas.wa.edu.au or contact Gabi on 9350 9222.
Bringing back a childhood in nature

by Kimberley Beasley  MPhil. EC (Curtin), Early Childhood Landscape Designer with Childscapes

There is an international movement to bring children in touch with nature through the addition of natural elements in public spaces, schools and early years settings. In Australia, the Guide to the National Quality Standard (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, 2011) states in Quality Area 3, Element 3.2.1 that “Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organized to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments” (p.83). The EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) explains that “natural environments … invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and a connection with nature” (p.16). Outdoor play in nature offers children a diversity of natural elements that contribute to the use of the senses, increased health benefits, interactive physical activity and social situations that prepare children for future learning and life experiences. Nature also offers opportunities for multidisciplinary learning such as science, maths, geography, art, dramatic and imaginary play and socialization. Natural spaces, especially gardens, give children opportunities to use all of their senses; flowers and shrubs, for example can be smelled, touched, looked at and some can be tasted. Young children are sensory learners and need elements such as flowers and shrubs to be able to freely explore these senses for themselves.

Despite the popularity of installing manufactured playground equipment in local parks, schools and early years settings, research by Hart (1979), Moore (1986), Freeman (1995) and Sobel (1996) clearly indicates that children prefer to play in natural outdoor spaces where they can manipulate their environment and elements including water, sand, soil, mud and grass, have trees to climb, and have resources such as berries, stones, flowers and wildlife to explore.

When considering adding nature to your services outdoor play area, it is advised to think of the whole space, develop a strategic or master plan and work through it in phases if needed. If your centre doesn’t take this approach, you will end up with an outdoor area that doesn’t flow and spaces that don’t connect or compliment each other. It is also a good idea to look at what is available to the children in your local area already and build on this through consultations with families and children. Consultation with children should be “more than a tick-box activity”, or writing a list, or drawing a picture (Clark & Moss, 2011). It should allow children to express their ‘hundred languages’ through drawing, photos, conversations, models, maps, and other methods that will allow all children’s voices to be heard on the design of the space. Working with an image of children as capable and competent means taking time to make what matters to children visible and dedicating one’s self to honouring children’s voices by making what matters to children a reality… and there is a mountain of research telling us that nature matters to children.

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Inspiration Spot

These are some centre photos that have caught our eye this month. Great Beginnings Parmelia made smoothies and banana bread for parents on their way to work, and Care For Kids created a quiet chill out space for their Possum room.

GB Parmelia

Care for Kids Duncraig

Renee, Care for Kids Duncraig: “During rest time when the room is darkened, this area looks beautiful, all dimly lit up with the lanterns. We regularly have stories and mat time in this area.

The lanterns hanging are made from plastic containers and are filled with fairy lights. We attached coloured cellophane around the outside to create different coloured lighting. There is a lantern on the ground for the children to explore whilst in the environment (we are making more of these because the children have shown great interest). Small wall torches are attached to the side of the divider so that the children can press them on and off themselves”.

Giant Dice

You will need:

- Cardboard, or a cardboard box
- Paper
- Masking tape
- Scissors or a box cutter
- Glue stick

Cut 6 equal-sized square panels from your cardboard, cut one out and use it as a template to trace 5 more.

Lay out your pieces in a basic cube shape and then tape the inside and outside with masking tape.

Attach circles, colours etc. to the faces of the cube.

This can be used in so many ways: you can put colours on each face of the dice and use it for transitions, e.g. if you have blue on, go and wash your hands, you can put instructions on each face e.g. walk like a penguin, jump like a frog, you can have the numbers on each face and use it for a giant game of snakes and ladders.

Thinking About A Childcare Traineeship?

CTAS offer traineeships in CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, CHC40113 Certificate IV in School Aged Education and Care, and CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care. If you are thinking of studying a childcare qualification, CTAS prides itself in providing high quality training from passionate, experienced trainers. Contact Mikayla on 9350 9222 for further information.

Future Skills courses, subsidised by the Department of Training and Workforce Development

Join in

Be a part of our newsletter, and you could earn your centre a $100 voucher for resources.

Just send in some photos of your centre’s makeover, an amazing experience you have set-up or your inspiring environment.

Send the photos to pdtraining@ctas.wa.edu.au with a paragraph describing the event.

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