Welcome

Interesting Happenings during November & December

World Kindness Day, 13 November: This day is about being kind to yourself, others and the environment. It is also about looking beyond ourselves, our culture, our race and religion; to see that we all have things in common and to focus on those common things. We can do this with children by talking about how we can be kind, modelling being kind, and acknowledging kind actions by children. You could organise a walk in the local neighbourhood to pickup rubbish, go to a nursing home to deliver baked goods, draw pictures of being kind, or collect toys or warm blankets for a specific charity. You might want to include stories about being kind. For more ideas, visit the Australian Kindness Movement website: http://kindness.com.au/

Pollinator Week, 20-27 November: Plants can’t move around so they rely on animals, mainly insects to pollinate them. This week celebrates the importance of the pollinators and what we can do to halt their decline. The website http://www.beesbusiness.com.au/pollweekmain.html gives tips on how you can create a pollinator habitat garden, what plants to plant, how to catch, observe and identify bugs, and make a ‘bug hotel’. It also contains the details of community events happening in WA for Pollinator Week.

For OSHC services, you might like to be involved in the Wild Pollinator Count that takes place 13-20 November, where you take 10 minutes to watch the flowers in the school or centre’s garden and take note of what you see. You can print the Wild Pollinator Count Tally Sheet to take notes and then, if you want, enter into the database to be found here: https://wildpollinatorcount.com/count-pollinators/

International Day of People with Disabilities, 3 December: The outcomes that this day aims to achieve are that we all recognise that people with a disability are important members of the community, that we acknowledge the many contributions that people with disabilities make to society, and that disability is a part of life and our diversity. As educators some of the things you can do are talking about differences and commonalities in all of us, talk about using all of our senses, look at different types ways to communicate (e.g. Braille, sign language), have a Senses Scavenger hunt (find something that smells sweet, that makes a noise, that feels bumpy etc.), watch videos of the recent Paralympics or paint with paintbrushes in their feet or mouth. For more information, visit the website http://www.idpwd.com.au/ or look at the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/idpwd

Our website contains information on the courses that we offer, the most current newsletter, and the CTAS Professional Development Calendar. Our web address is www.ctas.wa.edu.au

You can also find us on Facebook and Pinterest.
Story Book Baskets by Gabrielle Ryan

Story baskets are a basket with a story book and props that relate to that story. They are created to support an interactive experience that allows children to use their creativity, imagination and role play skills to explore their favourite stories through retelling the story, making up a different ending, or adding their own ideas to the story. Story baskets encourage children’s storytelling.

Having this experience set-up in your room can support children’s literacy: it involves children story-telling and sequencing from memory, understanding story structures, joining in with repeated phrases from familiar texts, understanding and describing story book characters, using ‘book language’ in play, and creating their own stories.

It encourages children’s creativity by using props to tell imaginative stories through play, make new characters from their favourite stories, taking on a role from the book, and remaining in character.

Using these baskets with others, supports the development of turn taking, sharing and working collaboratively.

Emotionally children can use the role play of these stories to work through the issues these stories might describe.

You can prepare the baskets using story books that are most popular within the age group you are taking care of or you could ask the parents and families what books they read at home and use this information to create the baskets at the centre. Asking the children to participate with putting together the baskets will spark their interest towards the experience and you will likely see that they are very keen to engage and take ownership over the activity. Don’t forget that the basket props and materials do not have to match perfectly with the story and that children can be very inventive when it comes to finding substitute items.

Story Inspiration: The Rainbow Fish
Activity: Play Dough
Materials:
• Story Book
• Play dough
• Play dough tools
• Glitter / sequins
• Ocean stencils
• Sea shells and ocean plants

Story Inspiration: Dear Zoo
Activity: Role Play Basket
Materials:
• Story Book
• Soft and hard animals
• Pens
• Postcards

Something in the water....

There is something happening at CTAS, with 2 of our Trainers recently announcing they are having babies! Congratulations to:

Ali, having her first baby, due 5 January 2017. It’s a girl!!

Jenna, having her fourth baby, due 8 February 2017. It’s a girl!!

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Thinking about chickens?
Kidz R Us Monmouth St have just got some Bantam Chickens. After doing some research, they found that this variety of chicken are generally quieter (better for daycares), have lots of different colours, and do less damage to the gardens because they have feathered feet.

Want more training?
What's coming up in PD?
Check our website for up to date calendar information. If your service requires specific training, consider our in-service sessions. We can customize any of our previous or upcoming topics, just contact us for dates and availability through our email: pdtraining@ctas.wa.edu.au

Creating a Learning Environment: WEBINAR, 16 November
This session explores creating stimulating play spaces and discusses their purpose and importance. It will examine how relationships impact the learning environment and will provide opportunities to reflect on current practices. QA3

Child Protection, 30 November
In this session we will cover types of child abuse, indicators, protective strategies and reporting procedures. Participants should be aware that the session content is sensitive and may be confronting, however, it is extremely important that early childhood educators have the skills and knowledge to deal with child protection issues should they arise. QA2

Reflective Practices, 7 December
This session will determine what constitutes reflective practice for educators and how it can be used to continuously improve events and experiences for children. You will also explore how to be a critical thinker. QA1

Be quick, as sessions are filling fast.

Free Sustainability Workshops
Perth Green Events is a website dedicated to being the hub for information on the environmental, gardening and sustainable living events in Perth and the surrounding areas. The calendar on their website lists various free and costed workshops available. Go to http://www.perthgreenevents.com/ for the monthly calendar of events, or to sign up to their monthly emails.
Cooking in Childcare by Alice Jackman, CTAS Trainer

Cooking with children is such a beneficial, fun and educational way to foster not only life skills but also support children in all areas of development.

Cooking with children supports their cognitive development through science learning when they are able to ask questions and test out the results, look at food changing colour or shape, and talk about where foods come from. It's valuable for developing literacy when you read a recipe aloud, discuss healthy food choices and have conversations whilst cooking together.

Social and emotional development can be whilst cooking when children wait for food to be ready, and take turns to mix, cut, and pour ingredients. Children's confidence can be built when making something they are able to eat and enjoy, and relationships are built and strengthened when you share experiences with children.

Motor skill development happens when children roll pastry, knead bread, brush pastry with an egg wash, cut vegetables, pour milk into a cake, stir batter or crack an egg, they develop their small muscles.

When doing any experience handling food, the first step is to ensure hygiene and food safe requirements are being met. By following the centre policies and procedures you will be sure to minimise any risks of infection or illness. The following points will also ensure an enjoyable, hygienic learning experience:

* Educating the children on germs and why we need to wash hands prior to the experience.
* Ensuring you are taking into consideration children’s cultural and/or dietary requirements. Children who may have allergies to consuming certain foods may not be able to touch them without a reaction as well.
* Ensuring the parents are happy for their child to take part in the experience.
* Brainstorming food ideas to cook with the children and asking for family input. You can always adapt recipes to healthier options if need be.
* Cooking meals promoting healthy eating using a variety of colours, textures and flavours and avoiding cooking unhealthy options such as packet mix cakes, cookies etc.
* Smaller groups are more beneficial than having a large group to ensure the experience is kept relaxed and you can spend quality time with each child learning and having conversations about hypothesising, measuring, hand-eye co-ordination, shapes, colours, textures.
* Using the produce from the centre; chicken eggs, herbs, vegetables or fruit from your garden. Another cycle of learning—sustainability!
* You could also create a beautiful recipe book with all the recipes the children have enjoyed baking and sell as a fundraiser for the centre or to donate the profits to a local charity.
* Take your time! It's so important not to rush as there is SO much learning to be done, take the time to really enjoy such a wonderful opportunity to connect.

There are so many benefits to cooking with children, it's about the process and the conversations you have with them, not just the end product.

Worm Farms: Not just a token idea

As more centres focus on sustainability, worm farms become a popular focus.

If you are choosing to add a worm farm to your centre, you need to thoroughly research them, how to care for the worms, what they can and can't eat, and who will look after the farm.

Go to a worm farm talk (often given for free by your local council), or get a local expert into the centre to talk to you and the children about care and maintenance of the farm.

Some of the pitfalls include:

- Putting too much food or the wrong foods, e.g. meat, onions or citrus
- Not cutting the food up finely enough
- Not having the right acidity, temperature or moisture for the worms

These issues can result in maggots, cockroaches, smelly farms, or dead worms.

Don’t just get a worm farm to tick a sustainability box, they are live creatures, it is important to do your research to decide if worms are right for your centre.
Inspiration Spot

These are a couple of centre’s photos that have caught our eye this month:

Pipsqueaks extended on the children’s interest in space, with space playdough, small world space role play and building a rocket.

Care for Kids Mosman Park explored the ocean through play and the way that pollution affects the beaches around us.

Noranda Child Care Centre set-up a number experience for their kindy children who are exploring math.

Re-grow

Thinking of how you can embed sustainability into your service? You could start with re-growing the scraps from the kitchen. Think lettuce, celery, carrots, bok choy, spring onions, coriander, lemongrass, leeks, and even basil.

With lettuce, celery, leeks, and bok choy, just put the stumps into about 1cm of water. Refill water if the level drops below 1 cm. When the new leaves start to grow, replant into soil.

The leaves of carrots are edible, so when you regrow from the carrot top you can use the leaves in salad.

For spring onions, leeks and lemongrass, use the bottom 3cm, with the roots (roots are not needs for lemongrass) and place them into a glass of water.

You can re-grow coriander by placing the stems in a glass of water, when the roots are long enough, transfer to soil.

Basil can be grown by taking the stems with leaf nodes and placing them in a glass of water in a sunny spot. When the roots are about 4cm, transfer into the soil.

With all of this re-growing, you will need a sunny spot.

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 with a detailed description explaining the photos.

Send the photos to pdtraining@ctas.wa.edu.au

Visit us on the web at www.ctas.wa.edu.au