Welcome
I can’t believe we are half way through the year! As the weather gets colder and wetter, many educators and children look for experiences to do inside, hopefully our ideas in the ‘Out of the Box’ section will give you some ideas during Healthy Bones Week, 5-11 August.

NEW STAFF MEMBER
We would like to welcome our new Professional Development Trainer to CTAS, Jan Spence. Some of you may know Jan from her work at Meerilinga Young Children's Services and the Australian Child Care Academy. She has vast experience in the VET and Professional Development for Children’s Services and Education arena. We are so excited to have Jan on board, she brings with her an enthusiasm and passion for children and Professional Development.

Special Days in July and August

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<td>1 July: Coming of the Light Festival</td>
<td>1 August: Jeans for Genes Day</td>
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<td>3 July: Silly Sock Day</td>
<td>5-11 August: Healthy Bones Week</td>
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<td>4 July: US Independence Day</td>
<td>8 August: Day of the World’s Indigenous People</td>
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<td>6-12 July: NAIDOC Week</td>
<td>11 August: Raksha Bandhan</td>
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<td>11 July: World Population Day</td>
<td>13 August: International Left Handers Day</td>
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<td>14 July: Bastille Day</td>
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<td>16 July: World Snake Day</td>
<td>16-22 August: National Science Week</td>
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<td>18 July: Nelson Mandela International Day</td>
<td>16-22 August: Children’s Book Week</td>
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<td>18 July: National Pyjama Day</td>
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<td>28 July: National Tree Planting Day</td>
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<td>29 July: Ed-al-Fitr</td>
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<td>30 July: International Day of Friendship</td>
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Did you know?
CTAS also provide traineeships in Certificate III and Diploma of Children’s Services.

If would you like your staff trained by a team of passionate, committed and highly experienced child care professionals, Call us today on (08) 9350 9222 and we would be happy to organise a consultation at your centre to discuss your specific needs.
Enabling environments

This is an excerpt from the Enabling Environments Professional Development session.

An enabling environment will:

- Provide children with stimulation and challenge
- Pick up on a child’s interests and enable them to explore and experiment
- Be flexible
- Support children’s learning
- Help children to learn about rules and how to communicate with others
- Encourage children’s creativity and imagination and permit them to take risks and make mistakes
- Promote equality and support children to develop a greater sense of other’s needs, cultures, religions and backgrounds
- Provide safety and emotional support
- Encourage independence and help children to develop a positive attitude towards learning

For more information on developing an enabling environment for children, please come to the PD.
Meaningful Documentation by Alice Tucker

Documenting children’s learning has been a vital part of being an educator for over 30 years. Through observing the children, and using an array of methods, we can extend on their interests and strengths through meaningful experiences which foster and promote their learning.

**HOW HAS DOCUMENTATION CHANGED?**

In the past, the types of observations used tried to ensure that children reached a set goal or milestone we had for the child. Most of these examples would base an observation on a child’s need, the aim being to try and ‘better’ their skills at a task set by the educator. These earlier observation techniques included: anecdotal records, running records, time samples, and checklists. These forms of observations are a valuable source of behavioural observations.

Since the introduction of the EYLF in 2009, there has been a big shift in Children’s Services observation techniques to a more child-centred approach. The goal is to enrich children’s learning experiences through purposeful actions by educators in collaboration with children and families. Some of the new observation documentation we have had to master include:

- Learning stories/Chronicles/Magical moments
- Photo observations
- Home stories
- Portfolios
- Spontaneous adventures

As educators it can be hard to grasp such a big change in how we document observations. It is easy to overthink the amount of information that is needed to be involved and how to reflect further to extend on the child’s interest and learning.

**WHERE TO START:**

- **Have an Engaging Title:** When you have a fun, bright title it will instantly draw the eye to the story. “Tom’s Amazing Play dough Sculpture” is much more inviting than “Toms Play dough”.
- **Keep it simple:** It is easy to get carried away when writing your Learning Story/Chronicle. Keep in mind that parents are usually rushing to or from work when we are expecting them to take the time to read a page long story. A story that is engaging and to the point, with a photo of the child related to the observation, can be very meaningful to a family.
- **Make it fun:** Use meaningful language that reflects your relationship with the child in the story. If you struggle with thinking of descriptive and interesting wording, how about creating an “Expressive Words List” with the rest of the team at a staff meeting?
- **Photos:** Incorporating a photo into a story is an invaluable way to draw the reader’s eye and will tell the story with little writing needed.
- **Reflecting:** When reflecting on the experience’s related outcomes, ensure to make it is personal to the child and show how it relates to their learning. By doing this you are encouraging the family to read on.
- **What’s next:** When extending on the child’s learning it is easy to overthink what to provide next or what direction to go in. Take a step back and have faith that as the child’s educator and friend you know their personality, interests, what they excel in and what areas they need support. If you still struggle to find a relevant extension, talk to the child, staff in the room or even ask their family what they think.
- **Parent Feedback:** It can be quite difficult to get parent feedback so why not try getting it verbally? Take the story to the parent when they come to collect their child and show them with the child present. Be really encouraging about how amazing this experience was with their child. Ask them what they think of it and document that on the story.

**Things to Remember:**

- Be mindful of your grammar and spelling within your documentation.
- Ensure you are keeping your observation/reflections in line with your centre’s Philosophy.
- Learning stories should be avoided for behavioural observations e.g.: biting/hitting.

Mastering meaningful documentation is an ongoing process and is constantly changing as the Children’s Services sector develops and grows. Through practicing your meaningful documentation you will understand the children further and be confident in reflecting about what the observations are telling us about the children. It will also build your relationship with the child and their family.

Photos courtesy of Pinterest
Infection prevention

With the cold and flu season upon us, we look hand washing to prevent the spread of germs. The most important ways to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases are:

- effective hand hygiene
- exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff
- immunisation.

Other strategies to prevent infection include:

- cough and sneeze etiquette
- appropriate use of gloves
- effective environmental cleaning.

Hand hygiene

Hands can play an important role in the spread of infection. The best way to prevent the transmission of disease is through effective hand hygiene. This can be done with soap and water, which removes both dirt and germs from the hands; or by using an alcohol-based hand rub, which reduces the number of germs on the hands.

How to wash hands with soap and water

The process of thoroughly washing, rinsing and drying your hands or a child’s hands should take around 30 seconds.

There are five steps to washing hands:

1. Wet hands with running water (preferably warm water, for comfort).
2. Apply soap to hands.
3. Lather soap and rub hands thoroughly, including the wrists, the palms, between the fingers, around the thumbs and under the nails. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds (for about as long as it takes to sing ‘Happy birthday’ once).
4. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry thoroughly.

Hands can be dried with paper towel or cloth towels. Cloth towels, if used, should be used by one person (i.e. not shared) and hung up to dry between uses. Cloth towels should be laundered regularly to reduce the risk of recontaminating or cross-contaminating hands.

Congratulations

Congratulations to our first recipient of the CTAS newsletter award. You may remember the Kinross Kids Care centre featured in our newsletter for the changes to their environment to make it more natural focused. They won a $100 voucher for IKEA for their efforts.

Here are (from left to right) Tessa, Saranne, and Tegan receiving the award.

We are always looking out for centres with innovative environments or ideas, please email Nikki at n.dedomahidy@ctas.wa.edu.au with anything new and exciting at your centre you would like to share and you could win the $100 voucher to buy resources for your centre.

Information from Staying Healthy in Childcare

MIRRABOOKA GREAT BEGINNINGS

One of our trainers came across great ideas for communicating with families, displaying documentation, reusing and sustainability from Ambra at Great Beginnings Mirrabooka.

Signage for children and families, with a question everyone could wonder about.

Another way of displaying documentation. In a spiders web. It draws you in.

A sensory mat on the floor created by the educator.

An example of sustainability, children are offered the opportunity to be the ‘Light Master’.
Health Bones Week is happening 5-11 August, here are some experiences from Pinterest that you could use.

All about me

Prior to this experience you might want to talk about healthy bones, read stories about bones (You Cant See Your Bones With Binoculars: A Guide to Your 206 Bones by Harriet Ziefert, Skelly the Skeleton Girl by Jimmy Pickering, Funnybones by Janet Ahlberg), or sing songs about bones (Dem bones). Mealtimes are a good time to start a conversation about healthy bones, and what foods help us to grow them.

You will need:

A roll of paper
Textas
Books with pictures of the skeleton
X-rays of bones

Each child can lie down on their back and an educator or another child can draw around them. Then each child can draw their interpretation of their bones.

Other bones ideas, sourced from Pinterest:

At the Cloverdale Childcare Centre, the children had been using the water in the outdoor environment for washing their ride on cars. The educators extended on this interest by setting up a life sized car wash.