

LEARNING MATTERS

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue no. 2 August 2011

The year is moving fast as we find ourselves in Term 3. The previous term has been quite busy and productive as we continue working within our new framework and fine tune any area's that need adjustment. The team has recently welcomed our new Administrative Assistant, Sheryll. Please make her feel welcome if you are calling or dropping in. Sheryll has come to us from Early Words and we are grateful to have her as part of our team.

As you are aware, the Learning Matters has now gone electronic and can be found through www.childrenfirst.asn.au and will be issued quarterly. If there are any topics you would like information on or can suggest for the next addition, please feel free to email lsp@childrenfirst.asn.au and we will do our best to include them.

Happy reading.

Kind regards,
Cindy Price - ELT coordinator



LSP UPDATE

After reopening the LSP books, we have had a steady flow of referrals. The current wait time is approx. 6-8 weeks and case load turn over is constant.

Please ensure all referrals are complete before sending them through to prevent any holdups.

EARLY START

The Early Start Team have been working with John Armitage Child Care Centre for the past term. Ongoing collaboration is occurring and the EST have been implementing the "Learn To Move, Move To Learn" program. The Centre staff have recently become more confident in implementing this program independently

PLAYVAN

We had a great day for NAIDOC day at Shalvey PCYC and would like to thank everybody who helped on the day.

Early Words and First Connections were launched and children received a show bag and a balloon and the parents had lots of information regarding Playvan.

Early Words Eddie made an appearance and handed out balloons and bags for the local children.



Playvan supplied colouring in for the children who were happy to enter the colouring competition and the winners received a new book.



PLAYVAN LOCATIONS

MONDAY

Butucarbin Aboriginal Corporation

28 Pringle Road, Hebersham

Morning tea provided
between 10am & 12pm

TUESDAY

Castle Glen Community Centre

Ridgecrop Drive, Castle Hill
between 10am & 12pm

WEDNESDAY

Yawarra Community & Child Care Centre

Lot 103 Carlisle Ave, Bidwill

between 9.30am & 11.30am
Morning tea provided

THURSDAY

Plumpton Neighbourhood Centre

337 Rooty Hill Rd Nth,

(Enter via Bottles Rd) Plumpton
between 10am & 12pm

FRIDAY

Doonside Community Centre

Cnr Graham & Hill End Rd, Doonside

(Enter community car park via Graham Rd)
between 10am & 12pm

For more information on Playvan please email Shareen at playvan@childrenfirst.asn.au or call on 9622 5438.

Playing with Babies – The Early Months



Play at this age is not just about toys; it's about back and forth interactions between you and your baby. Watch your baby's body language and facial expression by waiting. Interpret what your baby might be telling you. Respond positively using your facial expression and voice.

Here are some fun ways to interact with your baby:

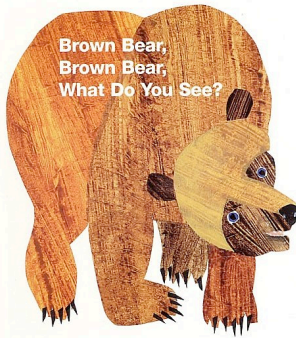
- Offer fun objects for your baby to look at. Move the object slowly from side to side and allow your baby to follow it with their eyes.
- Place your baby where he can kick or move a mobile or rattle.
- Make everyday routines playful. Sing a song during bathtime.
- Share books together. Read them to your baby and let her look at the pictures.
- Gently shake an object that makes a noise (eg. bell). Let him explore it with his hands. Slowly hide the object behind your back, then bring it out to gently shake again.
- Hold your baby in your arms in front of the mirror. Point to her body parts (eg. eyes, nose, mouth, arms) and talk about them.

For more ideas, check out Zero To Three: www.zerotothree.org/



Book Review

Bill Martin Jr / Eric Carle



Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See?

This story is a favourite with many Preschoolers.

The book is filled with large, colourful illustrations. There is lots repetition in the book.

This encourages children to take part with reading the story. Children love to predict what animal will come next.

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See? Is lot's of fun for both parents and children.

Five Top Tips for Reading Aloud to Children

1. Read slowly, clearly and with enjoyment.
2. Hold the book close enough for your child to see and touch the book.
3. Involve your child in reading the book. Pause to ask them questions. What animal will it be?
4. Young Children love rhyme and repetition in stories and songs. Children love to read the same book over and over again.
5. Reading time should be fun. Take a book when you go out. Waiting time can be story time.

Reference: *Paint Blacktown REaD*

Working with Anxious Preschool Children

Redbank House hosted a lecture by Jennifer Hudson, Ph.D. who works at the Emotional Health Clinic of Macquarie University; regarding anxiety in preschool children.

Anxiety problems are the most common mental health problems in preschool children (aged 2 -5) occurring in approximately 9.4% of the population. Types of anxiety include Social Anxiety, Separation Anxiety, Generalised Anxiety or Specific Phobia.

Common symptoms can include: crying or getting upset in new situations, not wanting to try anything new or different, not talking or being very quiet with people they don't know, not wanting to play or mix with other children, clinging or staying very close to parents.

The Emotional Health Clinic at Macquarie University runs a program called "Cool Little Kids" to target anxiety in preschool age children. If you have concerns about a child's level of anxiety, parents can refer to the clinic without referral. The clinic conducts a phone intake to determine eligibility for the program.

Please refer to their website for more information.

www.emotionalhealthclinic.com.au

BETTER START INITIATIVE

Better Start for Children with Disability is a new initiative of the Australian Government to help make vital early intervention services and therapies more affordable and accessible.

Funding for services and therapies is available for children with:

- Cerebral Palsy
- Down Syndrome
- Fragile X syndrome
- moderate or greater vision or hearing impairments, including deafblindness

For More information please go to:

www.fahscia.gov.au/betterstart

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/children_disability



Getting Ready for Kindergarten

The start of school for 2012 is fast approaching. Donna and Debby from LSP recently ran a "Starting School" workshop. Below are some of their tips about how to assist a child who will be transitioning to Kindergarten next year.

- Talk about the new school and show your child where they will be attending several times before school starts. If you can visit when other children are there it will help your child understand the size of the school and the physical layout. Show your child some the buildings (e.g. library, office, classrooms) and playgrounds.
- Attend any parent nights or orientation programs offered by the school.
- Help your child to practice self-help skills that they will need to use at school. There is less help available at school compared with preschool or childcare. Work on self-help areas such as their dressing (taking jackets, shoes and socks on and off), managing fastenings in clothes (such as buttons, zips or laces) and hygiene areas (such as washing hands and blowing noses).
- Practice eating the types of food that your child will get from their lunchbox at school. Talk about which foods they should eat at recess and at lunch. Make sure that they can open their food and drink containers, unwrap sandwiches and any unscrew lids.
- Arrange for uniforms, including shoes, well before the start of school. New shoes can hurt and need some wearing in before the first day.
- Involve your child in picking their school equipment (e.g., bag, library bag, pencils and case etc).
- Encourage your child to look after their own belongings and get them used to placing their belongings into their bag. Remember to label everything that goes to school in case something is lost.
- Remind you child about any of their friends who may be going to the same school. It is helpful if they can look for a familiar face.

KEY WORDS SIGNS



'Key Word Signs' (KWS)

'Key Word Sign' is a signing system that aims to provide children with an effective way to communicate their needs and wants as well as encourage language development. This signing system is particularly useful for children with little or no speech output. 'KWS' supplements a child's speech attempts thereby making it easier to understand what they are communicating. Always use 'KWS' in combination with simplified speech (1-3 words). Using 'KWS' encourages verbal development in all children.

How to Implement Use of 'Key Word Signs':

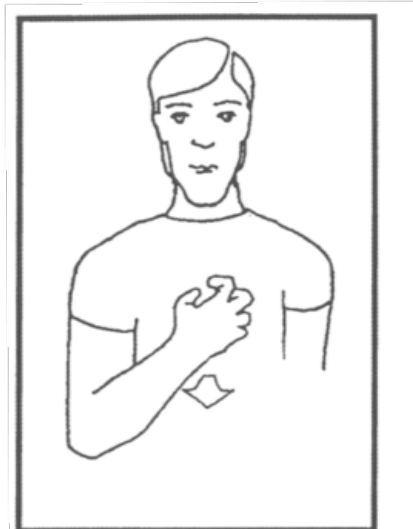
Children learn to use signs through regular observation of people signing around them and experience of using signs in their environment. It is recommended that all of the Educators in the centre learn and use the 'KWS' signs regularly when communicating with the focus child and the other children in the centre. 'KWS' that we recommend you start with are 'eat, drink, more, no, finish, stop, toilet and help'.



TO EAT - Close dominant fingertips onto ball of thumb. Tap formation on chin, twice.



TO DRINK - Shape dominant hand as for holding a glass - tilt to mouth as for drinking. (Natural gesture)



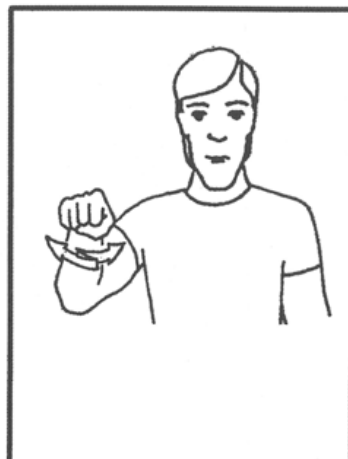
MORE - Cup dominant hand and place fingertips on centre chest - move hand forward.



TOILET - Fingerspell "T" quickly, twice, index finger on edge of hand.



TO FINISH - Extend dominant thumb, fingers closed. Rock hand formation from side to side several times.



NO - Shake dominant fist sideways in front of body.



TO STOP - Move open dominant hand forward from shoulder height.



TO HELP - Place dominant hand into non-dominant hand, palms together - move formation forward.