**Head Lice**

Please check your child weekly and treat before returning to preschool if you find eggs or lice. Talk to educators if you need help.

**2019 Membership**

Please complete and return the 2019 Membership Form in your pigeon hole/pocket. A current member will second your nomination.

The planned increase in membership fee has been postponed until 2020. Your Term 1 invoice will be amended to include an annual membership fee of $2.00 instead of $15.00.

If you have paid your Term 1 invoice in full, your $13 credit will be applied to Term 2 fees (or if you prefer, you can request a refund).

**Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday 19th March 2019, 6:30pm at Evans Head Preschool**

We hope every family will be represented at our 2019 Annual General Meeting. All staff members will be present. It is a chance to better understand what goes on behind the scenes and shows your support for the preschools.

**Constitution Update**

We have one Special Resolution on notice to amend the Constitution. All current members should have received notice in writing. If you are a 2018 member and did not receive notice, please contact us ASAP.
Outgoing Committee

Present: Belinda Fayle
Vice President: Les Lewis-Hughes
Treasurer: Kathryn Thomson
Secretary: Miranda Oakman-Jensen
Ordinary Member: Wendi Gow
Ordinary Member: John Bruin
Ordinary Member: Nicolette Thompson

A huge thank you to the 7 parents who have formed our Management Committee over the past year.

Some of the committee will not be returning, so if you are considering nominating, please have a chat to a committee member, myself, Lisa, Michelle or Cath for some background information.

All positions will be vacated at the AGM and members will vote for our 2019 committee members.

Why join the committee?

As a Not for Profit Association, we MUST have a Board or Management Committee to oversee the running of our two services by law.

It is an important role but not a difficult one. You will join a group of friendly, supportive and interested people. They meet twice per term (that’s only 8 meetings per year) to hear what is happening in our preschools and make decisions for the common good to keep our services viable.

All training is FREE and you will learn valuable skills to assist you to return to the workforce in the future, such as how a meeting operates, communication skills and an overview of how a small business operates. Employers see involvement in community organisations as a highly desirable attribute.

If you would like a reference, we are more than happy to provide you with one. So, pick up vital work and life skills in a non-threatening environment to get work ready and to feel you are playing a valued role in our little community.

Parking at Woodburn

Please do not park along School Lane or in our driveway. The area is narrow and it is dangerous if you are reversing with pedestrians using the space.

Parking – in pool/SES carpark or get some exercise and use the school carpark off Woodburn Street (your body will thank you).

Children in cars

Never leave children or animals unattended in cars, particularly in summer. We know it’s tempting if a child is asleep, but it is not worth it.

Floor Books

Please take time to check these out. Have you noticed the large project style books in the preschool when you pickup or drop off? You may see photos, jottings, children’s drawings, etc. in them. These are called “Floor Books” – see page 6 for more information.

Benefits of Rhymes

Interestingly, the cognitive development benefits of rhymes even extend to foetuses. A study from the University of Florida asked pregnant women to recite a nursery rhyme to their babies three times a day for six weeks at the beginning of their third trimester (28 weeks). The researchers then tested foetal recognition of the same rhyme spoken by a stranger at 34 weeks. By monitoring the foetuses’ heart rate, the researchers discovered that the foetuses recognised the rhyme, suggesting the power of rhyme to foster memory and reasoning.

**Bees Wax Wrap Workshop**

**Evans Head Preschool, 5th March, 3:30 – 5:30pm**

Anyone is welcome, so let friends and family know. The free workshop is on a drop-in basis. You can arrive any time within the 2 hours. We will close at 5:30pm. It’s ideal for a child to do the workshop with an adult – so pop in on your way home after preschool. Make a wrap for your home. You will be giving wraps away this year as cheap and practical gifts.

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**Zero Waste Lunchbox Challenge**

If your child brings a zero-waste lunchbox in the fortnight starting 4th March, they will receive a raffle ticket to go in the draw to win prizes such as a “Nude Food” lunchbox or other helpful stuff for reducing waste at home.

Embrace the opportunity to save money and reduce waste by weaning your child off expensive licensed/individual yoghurts, ziplock bags and gladwrap for example. We will be talking to kids about alternatives to help you along.

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**Medication**

Medication (including homeopathic remedies) is NEVER to be left in children’s bags.

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**Food Scraps**

If your child leaves food that would be suitable to eat at a later time, or if they are a finicky eater, leftover food will be sent home.

However, small scraps are fed to the chooks at Evans Head and the Worm Farm at Woodburn. This is an important part of learning about sustainability. Please talk to your child about giving these scraps to our chooks/worms so we do not have battles after lunch time.

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**New app to help parents ‘save the date to vaccinate’**

On-time vaccination is your child’s best protection against serious diseases. If children are not up to date with their vaccinations, it can also impact enrolment in child care and access to family assistance payments.

NSW Health has just released an improved Save The Date To Vaccinate app. This app helps you stay on top of your child’s immunisations and makes it easier for you to keep your child protected from serious preventable diseases.

Simply download the app, set up your child’s profiles and the app will create your family’s recommended immunisation schedules, along with handy reminders for when vaccines are due.

A childhood immunisation rate of 95% is necessary to control preventable diseases (known as ‘herd immunity’). While over 94% of children in NSW are fully immunised, over 105,000 babies are born in NSW every year so it’s really important that all parents know to vaccinate their children on time. By vaccinating, you’re protecting your child as well as people in the community who can’t be vaccinated themselves – including children with serious illnesses like cancer.

Woodburn Working Bee

Thanks to those who came along to spruce up the Woodburn Preschool. There are still jobs to be done. If you couldn’t make it, just talk to staff and they will find a job to suit you at a time that works for you.

Evans Head Working Bee – this Saturday 2nd March, 7:30am till lunch time.
Not succumbing to our own anxiety about risk

By Michael Hawton, former teacher, psychologist (MAPS) and Parentsshop founder, Feb 15, 2019

In recent times, insurance companies have directly influenced educational systems to make them safer and less risky. Parents have also demanded that pre-schools and early years settings keep children safe 100% of the time. Certainly, since my children were at pre-school, raised cubby houses, tree houses and play equipment have been lowered or even removed to meet accrediting bodies’ demands.

I am not against safer routines per se and I am not against risk assessments being done; these checklists are good to do, and they help educators to consider things that they may not have thought about. But I do think that we need to be aware of how a growing culture of ‘safetyism’ is translating into the way that we interact with children and the messages we inadvertently send to them about the world and their ability to cope with it.

One of my friends – now a grandmother – recently told me how she has observed her daughter-in-law often taking short, sharp ‘in-breaths’ in front of her four year old. This behaviour happens at the slightest whiff of danger or wrongdoing. It’s a habit, she reckons – and it’s making her grand-daughter increasingly anxious.

So, in both educational settings and in the smallest day-to-day interactions with young children, we appear to be becoming more focussed on risk.

There was a time not so long ago when, as educators and parents, we didn’t think like this. We didn’t see danger lurking around every corner and we didn’t fill our children with fear, based on the unlikely event of something possibly going wrong.

Take ‘stranger danger’ for example. Not only is this phrase a misnomer (because it’s more likely that a person harming a child will be a family member) but it fails children on two levels; it tells children that all strangers are potentially dangerous (which is patently absurd) and it does not give children the necessary practise they need to engage with a stranger to determine which strangers are safe and which ones they should be wary of. According to The Australian Institute of Criminology in their advisory report on missing children ‘Parents and educators must impress upon children the dangers of talking to strangers’. But, is this message exacerbating the highly-strung parent population?

It concerns me that a certain level of paranoia is creeping into our parenting and child-caring practices. And this can’t be good. When we see shadows where there are none or when evidence shows us that risks are minimal, we can distort risks posed to our kids. The perspective seems to be that if there is any risk at all, however small or remote, we must respond to mitigating that risk or find ourselves questioning how good a parent or educator we are.

In the US, which most of us would consider more dangerous than Australia or New Zealand, the chances that a stranger will kidnap or take a child are small. In fact, they are very small. Ninety-nine point eight percent of children who are reported missing, eventually return into their parents’ arms, unharmed – usually after not being where they are meant to be or because they ran away. In other words, the number of children who get taken by a stranger is minimal. For sure, we should be telling children not to go with someone they don’t know and we should tell them not to get into a car with someone they don’t know. But should we tell them to never talk to persons they don’t know?

Some years back, a New York mump by the name of Lenore Skenazy was portrayed as ‘the worst mum in America’. She became infamous for allowing her then nine-year old son to ride on the subway, alone, even though she had prepared him for this journey and trained him for it by travelling with him. She was lampooned as being irresponsible for daring to allow her child to travel by himself on the subway. But Skenazy stated she was merely attempting to help her child engage in a limited-risk situation to improve his resilience skills.

In their new book on how parents have become overprotective, The Coddling of the American Mind, Haidt and Luckianoff (2018) say that the strengthening of children’s mental well-being may have something to do with how we facilitate a child’s experiences for life’s problem-solving episodes, including how they can be coached to engage with these problems independently. Haidt and Luckianoff say, “in many respects our lives are better as a result of huge advances in safety and technology. Our lives are more comfortable, which is good. But, that gives us problems of progress. We recoil violently from discomfort.”

Compared to the 1960s, the levels in our ability to resolve issues for ourselves, called our internal ‘focus of control’ has been steadily decreasing. A strong internal focus of control correlates with a belief we can control our own destiny. Without a healthy sense of internal focus of control, children can feel powerless and anxious. The long-term studies by Jean M. Twenge et al. ("It’s Beyond My Control: A Cross-Temporal, Meta-Analysis of Increasing Externality in Locus of Control, 1960 – 2002), have been reflecting this downturn in children’s capacity to manage problems independently.

So where does this leave us?

First, recognise that each time we jump in to protect a child from a risk – for the sake of being safe – we may be robbing them of an opportunity to develop resilience skills. Making a decision about whether to intervene or limit an activity is about assessing the problem and seeing if it can be an opportunity to help your child to learn new skills, to manage their fear, to increase resilience and become independent problem solvers. By allowing children to engage with small and even uncomfortable risks, we can teach them to trust their own judgment and develop coping strategies. We can also act as their guide to help them negotiate a challenging situation or resolve an issue for themselves, and thereby build their own sense of competency and efficacy.

If you haven’t yet seen it yet, the Forest schools movement in Denmark is a great example of when teachers don’t jump in and fix problems. They let kids climb trees and play with knives! Curious? Have a look here.

In addition, some parents believe it is their role to protect their child from experiencing any consequences that occur as a result of a child’s poor behaviour or poor choices.

This tendency to intervene (which some call ‘helicoptering’) is likely to undermine a child’s understanding of how the world works. It prevents a child from realising that his behaviour can have an impact on others and that some choices may result in uncomfortable outcomes. Through play and through social experimenting kids learn the first lessons of winning and losing. As well, children need to know that they can survive and cope with situations that are unpleasant or uncomfortable. Part of a parent’s role is helping children deal with adversity and not to step in to alleviate their discomfort.

Exposing our children to a small amount of risk gradually allows those children to learn to cope in the real world and to develop confidence and self-belief that they can cope, even when things don’t go according to plan. If Luckianoff and Haidt are correct, when they describe young adults as being the most over-protected generation to date, then we need to start educating our kids as early as possible to take risks and to learn to manage their uncomfortable feelings.
WHAT’S HAPPENING... at Evans Head Preschool?

Throughout the year educators observe children in play, we discuss and interpret learning based on theory and our guiding documents such as the EYLF and the NQS. From here we use these observations to plan learning and learning environments ~ the program. The documentation comes in a variety of formats, such as anecdotal jottings, detailed learning stories, photographs or floor book entries. I will discuss each of these forms of documents in upcoming newsletters. We appreciate family input and feedback, as we know that children learn best when everyone who cares for them is involved or on the same page. The yellow forms you have filled out give educators an insight into children’s interests and areas we can support children. If you haven't filled one out please see educators for a Child Information Sheet.

We endeavour to update entries on children regularly, however, they may not be an individual document. We know that children (like us all) don’t learn in isolation. Many observations will be as a result of a group experience, where children collaborate to test their theories and ideas. If you have any questions about your child's "portfolio of documentation" please take the time to talk to educators. We are always available to discuss all aspects of our program.

Cath Gillespie
Educational Leader, Evans Head Preschool

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What is a Talking and Thinking Floorbook? – Claire Warden

The features of a Talking and Thinking Floorbook include:

Children's ideas and thoughts without re-framing or interpretation, so that they are a genuine record of their thinking.

Open ended questions that are created in response to an interest from the children. The questions are posed as part of a conversation and are designed to stimulate thought rather than test knowledge.

Higher order thinking. This level of interest can be stimulated by challenging children to create links in their own learning. Revisiting ideas over long blocks of time supports children to see that the process of thinking and learning is full of experimentation and adaptation.

Depth of Learning. The flow of the book follows children’s desire to explore an area in depth. Depth of learning created through giving children time to explore their own thinking is the key to long term embedded knowledge.

Collaborative Learning. The Floorbooks are designed to be a large size to allow groups of children to gather around them and engage in a learning dialogue around the content of the pages.

A variety of methods of presenting thinking. To respond to different learning styles and preferences the Floorbooks incorporate a wide range of writing.

Collates child centred ideas that are taken forward by educators. Floorbooks are in integral part of planning.

The books are available to children at all times. Joint ownership should give children the right to revisit their thinking whenever they wish. There has to be feedback loop to the children so that they know that the process of consultation is actually changing something.
WHAT’S HAPPENING... at Woodburn Preschool?

We had some very sad news last week about our bees... On Thursday we noticed that there weren’t any bees coming in and out of the new hive that was split a couple of weeks ago. When we came in on Friday, there were ants going in and out. We called Lyn, who did the split, and she came down to have a look for us. Unfortunately, the Syrphidae, or Hover Fly, had been able to get in to weakened hive, and had laid its eggs. We have had to get rid of the entire hive, so as not to infect the other one. At least the other one is still going strong, and we will try again in a year.

I hope you have been able to access your child’s folder on Drive, if you haven’t, please see me, as it can be a little tricky to get started.

Every part of our day at preschool is carefully planned for, discussed, and researched, and every activity we plan is to help children’s development in one or more domains. Even our routines during the day are carefully thought about and planned for. For example, you may be tempted to want to see your child start learning to read. It's only natural that you would want your child to have the best possible advantage when they start school. But there is overwhelming evidence that suggests that trying to teach a child to read before they are developmentally ready, may not only be a waste of time, but also may be detrimental to the process. Some are ready at the age of four or five, some not for many years later. This readiness includes complex neurological pathways and kinesthetic awareness. It includes the proprioceptive sense developed through sensory receptors in the muscles, joints, and tendons: a form of maturation essential for a physical sense of self (even essential for learning how to modulate one’s voice and to hold objects carefully).

Such readiness isn’t created by workbooks or computer programs. It's the result of brain maturation as well as rich experiences found in bodily sensation and movement. These experiences happen as children play and work, particularly in ways that cross the midline. They include expansive movements such as climbing, jumping, digging, swimming, playing hopscotch and catch, riding bikes, sweeping, running. They also include fine movements such as chopping vegetables, drawing, building, playing rhyming and clapping games, using scissors, and playing in sand. And, of course, there’s the essential growth that comes from snuggling, listening to stories, singing, trying new tastes, enjoying make believe. Children are drawn to such experiences. Without them, they won’t have a strong foundation for learning.

Part of our morning meeting routine involves performing Brain Gym, where we work on fun activities that help build neural pathways. Our cross-crawl movement is such a valuable experience, and it is so interesting to see that when a child ‘gets it’, we start to see fast development in other areas!!

Michelle Stanley-Jones
Educational Leader, Woodburn Preschool
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