



FEBRUARY
2025



Welcome to Childcare for 2025.

Welcome back everyone, both to our existing families who are familiar to our service, and we extend a very warm welcome and a big hello to our new families. We look forward to another great year ahead with your children at the Early Learning Centre. We currently have vacancies on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday in 2025. Please enquire by phone or email office@parkorchards.org.au

Available Session's -

- 8:30am-1:00pm
- 8:30am-4:00pm.

What's happening this month at the Early Learning Centre -

World Wetlands Day -----	2
World Read Aloud Day-----	5
Valentine's Day -----	14
Ramadan -----	28
Summer's Day -----	29



This Month to

- Xavier L 18th
- Alexander 20th
- Roman L 26th



WORLD READ ALOUD DAY – FEB 5

Literacy is not a gift given just to some lucky ones, it is a foundational human right that brings joy, economic independence, gender equity and a pathway out of poverty.

Join millions around the globe as we celebrate the power of reading aloud with **World Read Aloud Day**. This year marks the 15th anniversary of **WRAD**. Follow this link to download the World Read Aloud Day activity practise **Learn more here**

WORLD WETLANDS DAY – FEB 2

Nearly 90% of the world’s wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s, and we are losing wetlands three times faster than forests. Yet, wetlands are critically important ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, freshwater availability, world economies and more. **Find out more here.**

BEST BLOGS

OH, SO BUSY MUM

ohsobusymum.com.au/

Oh, so busy mum is full of tasty recipes, family travel tips and mum topics. Cheree Lawrence (AKA Oh So Busy Mum) has been blogging since 2014 and her following continues to grow.

Here you will find a huge selection of lunch box inspiration as well as very easy and fun ideas to get your child eating healthily. From budget tips to life as a mum of 4!

THE INSPIRED TREEHOUSE

theinspiredtreehouse.com

The Inspired Treehouse is led by paediatric occupational and physical therapists who are passionate about sharing information, tips, and strategies to help readers conquer the common developmental roadblocks that come up for kids.

They believe that the more parents, teachers, and caregivers know about child development and wellness, the better off kids are! Follow their website or Facebook for easy-to-implement activities that are designed to promote all kinds of developmental skills for kids.

BANANA CAKE

PREP 20 min | COOK 30 min | SERVES 16



INGREDIENTS

- 3 overripe **bananas, mashed.**
- 2 **eggs**
- 3/4 cup **olive oil**
- 1 cup Greek **yoghurt**
- 1/2 cup **brown sugar**
- 1/3 cup **pure maple syrup**
- 1 tbs **vanilla bean paste**
- 1 cup **buckwheat flour**
- 1 cup **plain flour**
- 1 1/2 tsp **baking powder**
- 1 tsp **cinnamon, ground**
- 1/2 tsp **nutmeg, ground**
- 1/4 tsp **ginger, ground**
- pinch of **salt**

Whipped Ricotta Maple & Chocolate Frosting

- 2 cups **fresh ricotta**
- 1/2 cup **pure maple syrup**
- 2 tsp **vanilla bean paste**
- 1/2 cup **cocoa powder**

METHOD:

To make the banana cake:

1. **Preheat** oven to 180 C (350 F) and line a 20 cm x 20 cm brownie pan with baking paper. Set aside.
2. **Place** the mashed bananas, eggs, olive oil, yoghurt, sugar, syrup and vanilla and whisk to combine.
3. **Sift** the buckwheat flour, plain flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and salt into the bowl and stir using a wooden spoon until just combined.
4. **Pour** the batter into the prepared tin.
5. **Bake** for 30-40 minutes or until a skewer inserted removes cleanly.
6. **Allow** the cake to cool completely. To speed up the cooling process, feel free to pop the cake into the freezer.

To make the whipped ricotta maple and chocolate frosting:

1. **Place** the ricotta into the bowl of a food processor and blitz for 1-2 minutes or until smooth.
2. **Add** the maple syrup, vanilla and cocoa powder and blitz for 2-3 minutes (scraping down the sides of the bowl) or until the frosting is smooth and luscious.
3. **Smother** the cooled cake with a thick layer of frosting.
4. **Cut** into 9 or 16 squares. Enjoy x

Recipe and image from mylovelittlelunchbox.com.

HEALTH & SAFETY: Button Battery Safety

They may be small, but if a child swallows a button battery; even a used one, it can burn through soft tissue in just two hours causing horrendous internal injuries and even cause death. Car remotes, calculators, thermometers, musical greeting cards, flashing novelty goods and kitchen scales – button batteries are everywhere in a variety of objects in and around the home. In Australia an estimated 20 children a week present to a hospital emergency department suspected of having ingested or inserted a button battery and children aged 0-5 years are particularly vulnerable. Roughly one child a month sustains a severe injury requiring a procedure to remove the battery or repair damage.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK FROM BUTTON BATTERIES?

Young children (0-5years) are particularly vulnerable to choking on or ingesting a button battery because of the relative small size of their oesophagus and because they are curious and are most likely to put objects in their mouths in their ears and up their noses.

Button batteries are small, can give a slight buzz on the tongue and look appealing to small children – like a lolly – so they are tempting to a child.

HOW TO AVOID THE RISK OF BUTTON BATTERIES

Many of the products that contain button batteries are not classified as toys and therefore don't have to meet the same safety standards that toys do. Follow these simple steps to be button battery aware:

Identify all items in your home that contain button batteries. Examples include children's toys, remote controls, watches, cameras, bathroom scales and flashing novelties.

Secure the battery compartment. Make sure the battery compartment can only be opened with a screwdriver or by applying two distinct and separate movements. Use gaffer tape to secure remote controls.

Elevate button batteries and items containing button batteries out of reach of children in a locked cupboard or container.

Eliminate button battery items from your home by buying alternate products that use regular batteries or a different power source. Safely dispose of any items you no longer need. Dispose of used button batteries immediately by wrapping in sticky tape and taking to a recycling centre.

If you do need to buy a button battery buy Energiser – child seal: Colour alert. These batteries are sealed well, taste bitter and turn a mouth blue when contact is made with saliva.

SYMPTOMS OF SWALLOWING A BUTTON BATTERY?

A range of symptoms are associated with ingestion of a button battery:

Gagging or choking, drooling, chest pain (this may present as grunting), coughing or noisy breathing, unexplained vomiting or food refusal, bleeding from the gut – black or red vomit or bowel motions, nose bleeds – sometimes this can be blood vomited through the nose, grunting, unexplained fever, abdominal pain general discomfort, spitting blood or blood-stained saliva or no symptoms at all. These symptoms are often associated with other conditions so it is important to consider them in light of the likelihood that your child has had access to button batteries or equipment that may contain button batteries.

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD HAS INGESTED A BUTTON BATTERY

If your child is having any difficulty breathing, call **000** immediately. Contact the Poisons Information Centre on **13 11 26** and you will be directed to the nearest hospital or emergency service that can manage the injury. Prompt action is critical. Do not wait for symptoms to develop. Do not let the child eat or drink until an X-ray is taken. Do not induce vomiting.



More information available via the QR code.

Source: Kidsafe (2025) **Button Batteries**
Retrieved from <https://kidsafe.com.au/button-batteries/>

KEEP YOUR SOIL HAPPY

The benefits of composting are endless. You can improve the structure, water retention and drainage of the soil in your garden, as well as increasing the retention of nutrients, resulting in happy and healthy plants. The best bit? Once you're all set up, your compost system will mostly look after itself.

Learning how to compost isn't difficult, Costsa Georgiadis has a very simple video explaining the steps to take to start composting at home. Find the video here <https://youtu.be/Uw5JVZSzMUA>

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT COMPOSTING HERE

THE HUMBLE NURSERY RHYME

Nursery rhymes are important for young children because they help develop an ear for our language. Both rhyme and rhythm help kids hear the sounds and syllables in words, which helps kids learn to read!

Nursery rhyme experiences, awareness, and knowledge were found to be positively related to accomplishment in early phonological and print-related skills. So, practise them in the car, on a walk or before bed. Sing them high, sing them low, say them using funny voices. It's fun to rhyme, and so good for your little one's early literacy skills.



FOCUS: Co-Regulate or Co-Dysregulate

All children can behave in ways that are ... not very adorable. Big behaviour can be exhausting and maddening for even the calmest of parents. There's a good reason for this. Children create their distress in their important adults as a way to share the emotional load when that load gets too heavy. This is how it's meant to be. In the same way that children weren't meant to carry big physical loads on their own, they also weren't meant to carry big emotional loads. Big feelings and big behaviour are a call to us for support to help them with that emotional load. When you are in front of a child with big feelings, whatever you are feeling is likely to be a reflection of what your child is feeling. If you are frustrated, angry, helpless, scared, it's likely that they are feeling that way too. Every response in you is relevant.

Children communicate through behaviour, and behind all big behaviour there will always be a valid need. The need might be for safety, connection, sleep, food, power and influence, space to do their own thing. We all have these needs, but children are still developing the capacity to meet them in ways that aren't as disruptive for them or the people around them. This will take a while. The part of the brain that can calm big feelings, the prefrontal cortex, isn't fully developed until mid to late twenties. Of course, as they grow and develop, they will expand their capacity to calm their big feelings, but in the meantime, they will need lots of co-regulation experiences with us to help them develop strong neural foundations for this.

But how do we help them? The most powerful language for any nervous system is another nervous system. They will catch our distress (as we will catch theirs) but they will also catch our calm. It can be tempting to move them to independence on this too quickly and insist they self-regulate, but it just doesn't work this way. Children can only learn to self-regulate with lots (and lots and lots) of experience co-regulating. Regulation isn't something that can be taught. It's something that has to be experienced through co-regulation over and over. It's like so many things – driving a car, playing the piano – we can talk all we want about 'how' but it's not until we 'do' – over and over – that we get better at it. Emotional regulation works the same way. It's not until children have repeated experiences with an adult bringing them back to calm, that they develop the vital neural pathways to come back to calm on their own.

How exactly do I co-regulate? The first thing to remember is that as much as you might want to fix your young one's feelings, you don't need to. They're safe. They might be struggling, but they're safe. As maddening as those big feelings might be, they're doing an important job – recruiting support (you) to help that young, still-in-development nervous system find its way home. When their feelings are big, it's more about who you are or how you are than what you do. They don't want to be fixed. They want to be seen and heard. They're no different to us like that. Meet them where they are, without needing them to be different for a while. Feel what they feel with a strong, steady heart. They will feel you there with them. They will see it in you and feel it in you that you get them, that you can handle whatever they are feeling, and that you are there. This will help calm them more than anything. We feel safest when we are 'with'. Feel the feeling, breathe, and be with – and you don't need to do more than that. You might not be able to do this every time, and that's okay. Here's how that works. We will catch their distress, as we are meant to. This gives us the opportunity to hold that distress with them, until those feelings start to soften. This can be a great thing when we have the emotional resources to do this, but we are human, and sometimes their fight or flight will raise fight or flight in us. We might get angry or frustrated (sharing their 'fight') or turn away and distract (sharing their 'flight'). Sometimes you'll be able to

give them what they need, and sometimes you won't. Both are responses of loving, beautiful parents, but sometimes as parents we get stretched too far too.

Whenever you can, validate what they are feeling, but let your intentions be clear. This means steering away from neutral voices or neutral faces. It's hard to read the intentions behind a low-monotone, neutral voice or a neutral face. If your intention isn't clear, it can trigger a bigger sense of 'threat' in an already unhappy nervous system. Sometimes, we might think we're speaking calmly when we're actually speaking 'neutrally', or low, slow, and monotone. The point is our calm voice might not always be calming. Whenever you can, try to match the intensity of your child's feelings (through your voice tone, facial expressions, presence) while staying open, warm, and regulated. 'I can see how upset you are my darling. You really wanted [...] and you're so annoyed that it can't happen.'

What if they want space, or less words? If they get annoyed with too many words, just breathe and be with, 'I'm going to stay with you until you feel better.' You actually don't have to say anything at all if talking doesn't feel right. Just stay regulated and feel what they feel. They'll feel it in you that you get them. Similarly, if they want space, it's important to respect that, but stay in emotional proximity. 'Okay, I'm just going to stay over here until you feel better. I'll be right here for you.'

But what if their big feelings are driving BIG behaviour? (Follow the link below to read this paragraph)

Your own state matters. An important part of co-regulation is making sure we are guiding that nervous system with tender, gentle hands and a steady heart. This is where our own self-regulation becomes important. Our nervous systems speak to each other every moment of every day. When our children are distressed, we will start to feel that distress. It becomes a loop. We feel what they feel, they feel what we feel. Our capacity to self-regulate is the circuit breaker. This can be so tough, but it can happen in microbreaks. A few strong steady breaths can calm our own nervous system, which we can then use to calm theirs. Breathe and be with. It's that simple, but so tough to do some days. But we must be radically kind with ourselves too. It takes a steady heart to soothe the heart of another and being that steady heart can be tough some days. Parenting is hard, and days will be hard, and on many of those days we'll feel the rawness and realness of it all. We'll say things we shouldn't say and do things we shouldn't do. We're human. Let's not put pressure on our children to be perfect by pretending that we are. Instead, let's repair the ruptures as soon as we can, and bathe them abundantly in love and the warmth of us. It's not about perfection, it's about consistency, and honesty, and the way we respond to them the most.



Read the article via the QR code.

Source: Young, Karen. (2021). To Co-Regulate or Co-Dysregulate. What to do when their feelings or behaviour get big. Retrieved from www.heysigmund.com



NATURE WALK

Going on a nature walk and deliberately noticing things encourages children to observe with all their senses. Children can learn to focus their attention and take in the details of things around them. It can be a peaceful, reflective experience for you and your children.

All you need is somewhere to walk – You can simply venture out your front door, walk around your local area, a local park or nature reserve. You could also plan a longer excursion and head to a beach or national park.

Remove barriers – A nature walk can happen in all weather, just be prepared! Always wear appropriate shoes for your environment. If it's sunny remember hats, sun smart clothing, sunscreen and bug spray. If it's raining bring raincoats and chuck a towel in the car just in case there is puddle splashing along the way.

Don't over plan – Don't rush. Try to let your children lead you where it is safe to do so. Watch them discover and show you things.

Noticing nature walk - Encourage your child to pay attention to the environment with all their senses. You can do this by asking questions as you go. For example:

- **Seeing questions:** what can you see? Look all around you, up at the sky and down at the ground.
- **Smelling questions:** what can you smell? Can you describe the smell? Leafy? Like mud?
- **Hearing questions:** what can you hear? Birds? The wind? Other people?
- **Feeling and touching questions:** what can you feel? Is the sun warm? Is the ground rough or smooth?

Raisingchildrennetwork.com (2022). *Noticing nature walk: activity for children 3-6 years* Retrieved from <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/activity-guides/sensory-play/noticing-nature-walk-activity-for-children-3-6-years>

LUNCH BOX IDEAS

It's every parent's mission to pack their kid's lunchbox with healthy and tasty food that gets eaten right? And, then you have the added challenge of fussy eaters and potentially food allergies too!

A healthy lunch box: why it's important A healthy lunch box full of fresh food gives your child **energy to play, concentrate and learn** all day.

What you put in your child's lunch box depends on your child's age. And how much you put in your child's lunch box depends on your child's appetite and the length of your child's day. For example, children who go to childcare, preschool or school for 6 hours a day might need to bring food for morning tea and lunch. Children who go for longer periods might also need afternoon tea. It's also a good idea to pack a bottle with tap water for your child to drink and refill. Fruit juice and soft drinks are high in sugar and aren't recommended for children. They can lead to [tooth decay](#) and other health problems.

Please check out this handy website for some tips <https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/nutrition-fitness/breakfast-lunches/healthy-lunches>



Sock Wrestling

Short simple activities to get some active minutes in the day.

Try sock wrestling for a fun and physical challenge either indoors or outdoors. Trying to remove one another's sock isn't as easy as it sounds – it can be energetic and at times hilarious.

Mark out the wrestling area using soft items. Explain to your child that play is to be kept within the ring to keep everyone safe. You also need to agree how to stop the wrestling match at any time, e.g. by using a clear command word such as 'stop'. Explain the rules to your child – that the object of the game is to remove the other person's socks. Wrestlers must try to stay on their knees and not stand up at any time. The winner is the first person to get the other person's socks off. Sit opposite each other and put on your socks. Once ready, say: 'On your marks, get set, go!'

Source: www.grapevine.org.nz/articles/teacher-talk-sock-wrestling