



# Newsletter

February 2015

**Kia ora and welcome back to the New Year, dear families and whānau of Bright Star!**

**Welcoming:** We got right into it in January with our trip to Te Papa to see the Dinosaurs, and our Wet 'n' Wild day was a big success.

We'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jennifer on the arrival of her new baby boy, and Melanie on her wedding in December.

In our over 2's, we welcome Miles, Mina and Chloe, and in the under 2's we welcome Keita, Tyler, Nathan, Chao, Leo, Toby, and all their families.

**Transitioning:** We also welcome Holly, Brennan, Maira and Ayva in joining the over 2's. The under 2's teachers have been spending time with them in the over 2's so they feel comfortable and are familiar with the routines and the new environment. Their new key teachers in the over 2's have also been taking an active role in building relationships with them, to help them build a sense of belonging.

We fondly farewell Brody, Pricilla, Nico, Alex, Reihana and Emily as they journey on to school, and Molly and Kaylee who have moved on from Bright Star. We wish them all the very best in their future learning.

The staff at Bright Star are excited to start the New Year with some great reflections on our teaching practice. We will be working with you all as we journey through our different self-reviews for the year.

## **Current programme: Exploring our imagination - Dinosaurs**

Just before Christmas, we noticed that some of our children had started incorporating dinosaurs into their play. This was an extension of a previous interest in imaginative play and the general interest in animals at the time.

A while back, the children had been exploring family roles. It was interesting to see them now using the plastic dinosaurs to explore family relationships in their role play. The children were allocating different roles to each dinosaur: mother, son, sister, etc.

Other children were walking around with the plastic dinosaurs and making different sounds. One child had been matching pairs of dinosaurs, exploring the early mathematical concept of patterning.

The children were not only exploring role playing with the dinosaurs, but talking about how they became extinct. The team recorded some of the dialogue, revealing some fascinating theories.

Pricilla said that "dinosaurs are extinct and they are at Te Papa". The reference to Te Papa may have something to do with the recent dinosaur exhibition, which proved popular with some of our families.

Macrae theorised that dinosaurs were extinct due "to there being no rain and that is why they are not here".

Mary was of the opinion that "a meteorite had hit earth".

We shared many discussions about these theories, and about what dinosaurs had looked and sounded like.



In groups, the children are going for a dinosaur hunt with maps.

The team wondered if this continued interest in dinosaurs had been helped along by some of the children visiting the Te Papa exhibition. We were eager to investigate dinosaurs in more depth with the children!

We organised two trips to Te Papa to extend the children's interest further and to increase their knowledge about Dinosaurs. The trips went well! The children discussed their adventures when they came back.



We took two groups to visit the Dinosaur exhibition in Te Papa. You really enjoyed yourselves! The trip helped you further understand the concepts you have been learning and develop new knowledge and vocabulary.

### What the children have learned so far

- \* There are many types of dinosaurs and not just T-Rex.
- \* They know that T-Rex is also known as the 'Tyrant Lizard'. It had robust bones and a massive skull.
- \* The children know the distinguishing characteristics of six dinosaurs.
- \* They know that T-Rex was a gigantic carnivore.
- \* They know that stegosaurus ate plants, which made it a herbivore. It also had plates on his back and spikes.
- \* Diplodocus had a whip like tail and was humongous.

- \* Triceratops had frills around its neck and three horns on its nose. He also liked to eat plants.
- \* Ankylosaurus was a giant and was covered in strong armour to protect him from other dinosaurs, especially T-Rex.
- \* Brachiosaurus has a long neck to reach treetops, so that it could eat. Its front legs were longer than his back legs.

The children also acquired new terminology, such as 'herbivore' and 'carnivore', as well as new concepts and theories about how dinosaurs became extinct.

It has been exciting for the teachers to learn more about dinosaurs alongside the children. We will continue to observe where this moves to next. It's also been great to talk to parents about their children's interest in dinosaurs. Some siblings have been studying dinosaurs at school, which has coincided with our children's learning. If families have any stories to tell about their child's interest in dinosaurs, please let us know!



The children are fascinated by the movie showing dinosaurs running around Te Papa!

## What is happening in the Pukeko room?

The teaching team would like to take this opportunity to welcome back all our old families and welcome our new families to the Bright Star whānau for 2015!

For the new families, we are looking forward to getting to know you and supporting you with the settling in process for your child. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask the teaching team. Developing a partnership with you, as well as your child, is very important. We are also looking forward to working with our existing families and children on their continuing journey of development and learning.

As we welcome our new families to the whānau, the under two programme focus will be centred around the settling in process and the importance of this to your child's sense of wellbeing, belonging and development.

The environment will be set up to support the process with the teaching team providing a caring, nurturing environment. Throughout the programme, there will also be a focus on providing an environment to support and encourage the development of vocabulary, social and self-help skills.



Tuakana-teina relationship: Jaydon is helping his new friend Chao settle in the Pukeko room by playing with him.

## Centre Reminders

- \* Please sign your child in and out every single day. This lets us know who is at Bright Star in case of an emergency, as we use the daily sign in chart to guide us.
- \* It is VERY IMPORTANT that you contact us by 9am via SMS or a phone call if your child is away, for the same reasons.
- \* Please name all your child's clothing (including shoes), drink bottle, bag, and so on in order to ensure your child's belongings are returned home safely. Please help your child keep their precious toys at home, because once brought into Bright Star, they will need to be shared or put away in the office.
- \* We have noticed on several occasions that we are unable to carry out instructions on the medication chart as they are a bit vague. Please clearly state exactly what time, amount, and how many times your child requires their medication per day. Feel free to ask staff for help.
- \* Lastly, if you notice that your child is unwell for more than a few days, please keep them home to help them recover faster. We really appreciate your consideration.