



Newsletter

June, 2014

Kia ora, everyone! We are already halfway through 2014. Here is all the news about what's been happening here at Bright Star!

Welcome & Farewell

Thank you to all our families for your ongoing support. This month, we welcome Kareena, Molly, Carlos, Alice, Alex and their families to the over 2's room from the under 2's, along with Kaylee, Alyssa, Maira, Nicolas, Renee, Joyce and their families, who are new to the centre whānau. We also welcome teacher Adora to our under 2's teaching team.

The team wishes Arion, Aarav, Talisha, Sway, and Suri a hearty farewell and all the best for the next part of their learning journey.

Matariki Celebration

The children have been celebrating Matariki (Maori New Year) at Bright Star, through creative art, story telling, waiata, dancing and discussions. The team, along with our children's help, made a delicious soup with the vegetables that you all brought in at lunchtime on Friday 27 June.

Last Term's Programme

Last term, we noticed that some of our children enjoyed exploring creative art activities, either as an individual pursuit or small group activity. For preschool children, their artwork sometimes represents a story or an idea. For toddlers, rubbing paint between their hands and then patting a piece of paper is simply a soothing and fun experience. Our teaching team reviewed the importance of visual

arts in enhancing children's intellectual, social and emotional development. As a result we have implemented various art experiences in our daily programme.



Children's Current Interest and Programme

At our last programme planning meeting, the teachers discussed the children's interests and what they were displaying through their play. The children are developing working theories about friendship and relationship building. They are exploring ideas about friendship through play and through the constant negotiation that occurs between friends about the different roles they will take on in their play scenarios on a daily basis.

Working out the different dynamics of a particular friendship group presents a range of dilemmas. The children have to call on a range of strategies to solve these situations. We have noticed the children using a range of strategies to be a good friend. However, these strategies are not always effective! So what do the children understand about friendship and what it means to be a friend to each other? How about how to look after each other in a respectful way?

As a team, we have decided to focus on relationship building and children's thinking about friendships for our current programme.

As a team we have explored the following areas with children:

- Taking photos showing friendship in action and showing them to the children
- Looking at children's perceptions of leadership
- Looking and pointing out actions that show being a good friend
- Talking about how we feel when a friend is being unkind and what we can do when this happens (building resilience)
- Looking at words that describe what being a friend requires, e.g. kindness, support, love, thoughts, body language, etc
- Record the children's language and asking them about their working theories on what friendship is and what it means to be a friend

During the exploration of our current interest "friendship", we also came across the concept of *emotional intelligence*. All the teachers in our staffing team agree that emotional intelligence, and nurturing this in our children at Bright Star, is paramount to their well-being and development.

So why is emotional intelligence so important for a child? Managing anxiety, anger, fear, frustration, sadness, and so on becomes increasingly difficult as the world we live in changes drastically on a daily basis. The ability for a child to manage her emotions in a healthy way will determine the quality of their life in a much more fundamental way than her IQ (Intelligence Quotient) will. Our research in the past few weeks has shown that psychologists have come to call this ability EQ, or Emotional Intelligence Quotient. High EQ starts in infancy with the baby's earliest interactions with caregivers, from which he develops feelings of security and trust.

This links in very well with our early childhood curriculum, where Te Whāriki states that "The early childhood curriculum reflects the

the holistic way children learn and grow, where all areas of cognitive, social, cultural, physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of human development are integrally interwoven" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 41).

We are working as a team to encourage children to balance their emotional and mental well-being, along with their physical, academic and social skills.



Parent's Workshop-Schema

The team would like to say a big thank you to all the parents who attended our very first workshop on schemas. The team really enjoyed presenting to you. It introduced some of the team members to presenting and we all acquired some new skills. We also appreciated the feedback, which was helpful and we will take this into consideration when presenting our next workshop.

Programme planning: under 2's

At the moment the children are showing an interest in dramatic play in the area of cooking and dolls. Dramatic play is a great way for the children to develop imagination, self-help skills, relationship and communication skills as well as re-enact real life experiences. There is also a strong interest in puzzles and books which have given the children opportunities to extend on their vocabulary, mathematical and communication skills.

In the outdoor area, the children are enjoying our new bridge and larger climbing frames. This has been great for extending their physical development and skills, along with their active movement.