



Newsletter

March 2017

March 2017! Time is flying, and we have been super busy playing, learning, and enjoying the warm weather that the last few months have given us. Even though we have not had a very consistent few months in terms of weather, we have still made the most of our dry days.

* Greetings & Welcoming *

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new children and their families that have joined our Bright Star whānau. We also farewell Miles, Carlos, Mila, and Jackson who have left for school, and Kareena who will be leaving this month too.

Over 2's Programme —Insects and Bugs

(Linda)

From the previous animals programme, we had noticed some children were especially fascinated about little creatures, like weta, bees, and stick insects. We noticed some children searching for bugs underneath the stepping stones, and some children really enjoyed bringing bugs that they found in their garden to observe with their friends.

The warmer weather has brought excitement to our vegetable garden. The kale flowered and this invited a range of bugs to visit our garden every day. Butterflies and honey bee's visited our garden, and they often attracted a group of children to observe them in wonderment. The children learnt how to observe little creatures with respect, without interrupting them.

To encourage children's curiosity in bugs and little creatures, we decided to implement an "Insects and Bugs" programme for our tamariki. Here we will share some of our learning experiences.

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Curious and excited by bugs, a flurry of wonderful questions began. Questions such as "What kinds of bugs can fly?", "Do bugs sleep?", "Do bugs have teeth?"... All of these questions prompted interesting and relevant discussions and investigations that fit right in with our science curriculum.

Children's interest has also been extended to creative art representation. With teachers' support, some children made bees with recycled boxes and pipe cleaners, spiders with paper mache and egg cartons, and stick insects using the cardboard tubes from Glad-wrap rolls. Through these craft activities, children have learnt about the body parts of different insects and bugs.



There are so many ways to explore insects and bugs through literacy and numeracy. For example, the children learnt about the names of different kinds of insects and bugs through a bingo game; and they have learnt about the habitats of different insects and bugs through a game called 'Tracing their Way Home'.



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Through this programme, our children are getting more familiar with some of our famous early childhood literature, such as Eric Carl's bug series, namely *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *The Very Quiet Cricket*, and *Caterpillar Shoes*. The children especially enjoy the puppet show of *Caterpillar Shoes*. Through the teacher's vivid puppet illustration, the children learnt about the social value of sharing and caring.

Our tamariki also had wonderful experiences of observing the characteristics of the life cycle of butterflies. Every morning when the children arrived at the centre, they were eager to observe and identify any changes of these little caterpillars, and they were extremely excited when they noticed how the caterpillar transformed into its cocoon. Through this experience, the children not only learnt about the life cycle of butterflies, but they also learnt about the basic skills for scientific exploration: observing, comparing, and contrasting.



The wider community is part of our programme also. The Koru group children made a trip to Te Papa to visit the Bug's Lab. The trip really extended our knowledge about insects in the wider natural world.



We also explored grassy areas around and outside of Bright Star, where we discovered lots of amazing insects and bugs.



The children's interest in bugs and insects is going strong. The teaching team will carry on following children's interests and implementing more exciting learning experiences for our tamariki.

* Experiencing Yoga *

Here at Bright Star, in order to honour our healthy heart award, Samin practises Yoga with our tamariki on a regular basis. She explains to them the benefits of Yoga which are helpful for their growth and development. The different yoga asanas they practise are Kapalbhati, Anulom vilom, Bhramari, and Bhastrika.

Just a few of the benefits of Yoga for children:

- Develop body awareness
- Learn how to use their bodies in a healthy way
- Manage stress through breathing, awareness, meditation and healthy movement
- Build concentration
- Increase their confidence and positive self-image
- Feel like they belong to a healthy, non-competitive group



* Pukeko Group *

What a great start to 2017 we have had in the pukeko room! We have been making the most of the warm weather by having many animal related activities, which is our current programme - such as water play and mud play with plastic animals.



We have also been busy playing music and singing songs related to animals, dramatic play with animal puppets and masks, as well as having a visit from Jane and Tyler's pet budgies - thank you, Janel! We would also like to thank the parents who have brought in photos of their pets and child.



We welcome our new permanent teacher, Amanda. We also welcome our new children; Omkar, Mira, Riley, Samantha, Zoe, and their whānau. At the same time, we farewell the children that have transitioned to the over 2's room.



* Upcoming parent teacher meetings *

This month, your child's key teacher will be talking to you about arranging a time to discuss your child's individual learning journey. This is an important time for teachers and parents, as it gives us all a little uninterrupted time to ensure that your child's learning, developmental, and cultural needs are met and extended.

The teachers also really enjoy putting your child's monthly learning story on Storypark, and we ask all our parents to kindly add comments as this really motivates our teachers. Sometimes we show the children these stories on the laptop and we read out their parents' comments. The children just love this. Thank you to all the parents who continue to comment regularly.

* Reminders *

Please remember to sign your child in and out every day, and inform us of absences. This is very important information, especially in case of an emergency such as illness, natural disaster, fire evacuation, etc. Please remember to inform the centre by 9am if your child is going to be away on that day.

Please continue naming your child's clothing and other precious items to ensure they go back home.

* Self-review *

This year we have kicked off the year with a self-review revolving around the topic of physical activity, where the teachers have asked themselves - "How effectively are we supporting and extending children's physical abilities outdoors?".

The teachers have been busy researching a wide range of literature topics such as the statistics of obesity in young children in New Zealand, the mental and physical health benefits of physically active play, the kind of resources we should be looking at getting for our outdoor area, the regulations and legal standards that teachers have to follow when setting up outdoor activities for the children, and much more.

Please do feel free to contribute to any of our self-reviews, or come and have a chat with Mel for any queries. We really appreciate your involvement in our self-reviews. We will update you with the results of this self-review via email.

* Let's learn waiata together *

Pūrerehua

*Pūrerehua (Butterfly)

*Rere ru nga hau (Carried on the wind)

Papaki parihau (Fluttering its wings)

Rere ru nga hau (on the wind)

Ka piki ka piki (Up and up)

Ru nga rawa e (Way up high)

Papaki parihau (Fluttering its wings)

Rere ru nga hau (on the wind)

Ka tau ka tau (It lands, it lands)

Ru nga pu ā wai (On a flower)

Ka whānau hua (To lay its eggs)

A pū-rere-hua (this butterfly)

Ka tahi ka rua (One, two,)

Ka toru ka whā (Three, four)

Ka rū ka rē (They shake and quiver,)

Ka puta e whā whē (Out pops four caterpillars)

Repeat*