

SHARE YOUR SMILE WITH THE WORLD.
IT'S A SYMBOL OF FRIENDSHIP AND PEACE
– CHRISTIE BRINKLY

FEBRUARY
2022



ON *this* MONTH



What's new at Smarty Pants?

AT SMARTY PANTS ELC

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Sustainable Living Festival	1-28
Chinese New Year	1
World Wetlands Day	2
World Read Aloud Day	2
Safer Internet Day	8
National Apology Anniversary	13
World Day of Social Justice	20

Welcome back to all of our families. We extend a warm welcome to our new families who have joined Smarty Pants this year. We trust you will settle in quickly and we look forward to building valuable and special relationships with both you and your children. As always it will be a busy year for both the centre and our families. The team at Smarty Pants has already been hard at work to settle children into their new rooms and establish familiar routines. It has been challenging with the mask mandates and outside drop-offs. We would like to invite you all back to the garden at home time, allowing you to see your child in play and give you more time to speak with educators. We are hoping to be back to open door rooms really soon. We encourage you to please take the time to meet the teachers and familiarize yourself with both the centre and your room routines. Changing your child's room is a big milestone and you will be given a transition form that will help you to work with the staff to settle your child into the new environment. If you would like to spend some one-on-one time with your child's room leader, please do not hesitate to set up a time to meet. We welcome feedback and are happy to work with our families to ensure children feel safe, supported and secure at all times.

I look forward to another great year.

Andrea & the Smarty Pants team





SUSTAINABLE LIVING FESTIVAL - FEBRUARY 1-28
Throughout its history, National Sustainable Living Festival (NSLF) has been a strong advocate for urgent climate action at a scale and speed that can match the escalating climate emergency.

In 2022, NSLF events will focus on these themes: 'Knowing Country, 'Reset & Repair, 'Local Matters' and 'Waste Not. [Find local events here](#)

WORLD WETLANDS DAY - FEBRUARY 2

World Wetlands Day is celebrated each year on 2 February to raise awareness about wetlands. Australia has 63 Ramsar wetlands covering every state and territory. They cover more than 8.3million hectares. Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory is one of those. Take part in the Global Celebration in your community. You can find events near you via the link below. Participate and share via [#WorldWetlandsDay](#) For more information [go to the website here.](#)



THE FRIDGE PESTO



PREP 10 min | BLITZ 2-3 min

Pesto... one of the most versatile condiments to keep stocked up in your fridge or freezer. What do you use pesto for? Here, it's added to pasta, gnocchi, sandwiches, wraps, dolloped through frittata and risotto. I have created a nut free recipe so that's it's school friendly give it a try... so creamy!

INGREDIENTS

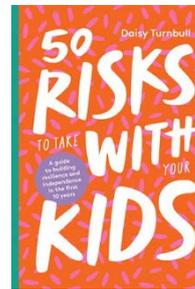
- 2 cups basil
- 1 clove garlic
- 60g Grana Padano or Parmesan cheese
- 50g pumpkin seeds
- 50g sunflower seeds
- 70g olive oil
- 1/8 cup water
- Salt & pepper

METHOD: Simply add all of the ingredients into a blender (or mortar and pestle) and blend/grind up until the right consistency.

*Love this recipe and want more? Go to [Jo Kate Nutrition](#) Jo's course *The Nourished Family* provides you with a realistic approach to nutrition, health and cooking and will teach you foundational principles to use for the rest of your life.*

Book reviews

The un-parenting parenting books you'll enjoy reading.



50 RISKS TO TAKE WITH YOUR KIDS

DAISY TURNBULL

A guide for parents and carers to nurture resilience and independence in kids as they learn to take their own risks.

50 Risks to Take with Your Kids, you'll find risks that build physical skills, social confidence and character development before kids enter those 'risky' teenage years. You'll also find some all-important parenting risks that will encourage you to step outside your comfort zone and think a little differently about raising children. It may sound counterintuitive to say that the more opportunities you give children to test boundaries, the better they will 'adult', but it's true. The more they are allowed to play in the mud, create games and find their own solutions to problems, the more they will thrive later in life.

DADLIFE: FAMILY TALES FROM INSTAGRAM'S FATHER OF DAUGHTERS

SIMON HOOPER

From uninitiated parents-to-be to those who know the ropes in families large or small, everyone will find something to relate to in Simon's hilarious and chaotic tales of his own home life.

'This is the story of my journey into parenthood, from being a 24-year-old man-child with no idea of what being a dad involved, to where I find myself today: the single male representative in a household of five women, or in other words, outnumbered. Our house is now known as "the place where silence came to die". It's also where you'll find carpets that are made up of 50% glitter and where there are more pink stuffed animals than at a colour-blind taxidermy specialist. But I wouldn't change a thing. These people are my life.' Enjoy the laugh.



FOCUS: 4 Things to Say Instead of “Because I said so”

Whether we’re talking about closing the front door, making a replica of the Alamo out of salt dough, or cleaning poor Goldie’s dirty tank, we all know it shouldn’t take threats, bribes and every-three-minute “reminders” to get our kids to complete their responsibilities. So why does it? One thing is for sure: **“Because I said so” doesn’t motivate this generation of savvy-yet-stubborn kids.** And millions of parents are at their wit’s end trying to figure out how to get the cooperation they’re looking for.

Yes, you are the parent and while sometimes kids just have to do what they are told, the truth is, the authoritarian “Because I said so” method of parenting is on its way out. Collaboration and respect are replacing the top-down dominance of the previous generation. Just like it would seem archaic for husbands to “demand” dinner on the table when they walk in the door from work and today’s bosses wouldn’t berate their employees for walking in five minutes late, **parents shouldn’t depend on pure authority to get kids to toe the line.** We can attribute these changes to big societal shifts, seen everywhere from cable TV to social media, and they’re not changing back anytime soon. Our kids **see us respectfully negotiating** with other adults all over the place, from the dinner table to the doctor’s office to the business calls we take at home.

The reign of *cooperation* has changed everything when it comes to parenting our kids, which is why “You’ll do it because I told you to” and “Just wait until your father gets home!” is more likely to invite a power struggle rather than getting won’t get our kids to jump into action. What’s more, teachers and coaches treat kids with respect, and in turn, children perceive that this type of communication should be the norm – even at home. Because of these societal changes, **demanding compliance and depending on “Because I said so” will fuel more power struggles than most parents ever bargained for.** The good news is we can still help kids clean up their acts as long as we shift our **parenting techniques.**

4 Phrases to Use Instead of “Because I said So”

1) “When...Then...” The good news is we *can* get our kids to do their jobs in a timely manner—before their favourite show, for instance—without barking orders. Instead, phrase your requests by saying, “***When*** you’ve brought me your plate, ***then*** you may enjoy your media time for the day.”

Then—and this is the most important part—completely ignore the grumbling to avoid a power struggle. Say it the same way every time (“***When*** you’ve finished picking up these toys, ***then*** you can go outside with your friends.”) Soon your kids will leave the couch in a more timely manner and actually complete their responsibilities.

2) “Anything you can do to...” If there’s one thing that drives kids crazy, it’s being bossed around, and can’t we all relate? Instead, *invite cooperation* by sticking to respectful phrases when you could use a hand raking leaves or packing for the beach—the type of thing you’d say to your co-worker. Say, “**Anything you can do to help**



us get ready for our beach trip would really be a huge help,” or, **“Who can help me rake all these leaves into a giant pile before it rains?”** Although you’re not always guaranteed to get the help you’re looking for with these types of phrases, when your kids do pitch in they’ll feel much better about contributing on their terms, and will be more likely to do so in the future.

3) “What’s your plan for...?” Why does it always seem that we’re more concerned with the Big Banana project due on Friday than our kids are? To ward off a week’s worth of nagging about it, instead simply ask, **“What’s your plan for getting your project done in time?”** In addition to being more encouraging (it assumes they have a plan in place), this puts the ball firmly in their court—and gets them thinking about ways to get the job done, no nagging necessary.

4) “Asked and Answered.” This tool, from Lynn Lott, MA, MMFT and co-author of the *Positive Discipline* series with Jane Nelsen, EdD, effectively stops **whining** in its tracks. When kids whine about your decision not to allow them to roller skate in the living room, for instance, respond with, “Have you heard of ‘asked and answered?’” Then briefly review the question and answer (“**Did you ask me if you could roller skate in the living room?**” “**What was the answer?**”). Next, ask, “Do I seem like the kind of parent who would change her mind when you ask me the same thing over and over?” At this point, the child will probably protest, roll her eyes, walk away, or a combination of these. Ignore it. From now on, anytime your child repeats a question you’ve already answered, simply say **“Asked and answered.”** She’ll quickly get the point and stop whining so much.

Final Thoughts: Even though we’re living in a more cooperative age, remember that you still hold the authority as parent. **You’re simply more likely to get cooperation rather than pushback if you seek solutions and invite cooperation rather than handing down orders.** And when you do have to put your foot down? It won’t feel as heavy if you haven’t already done so a dozen times that day. Enjoy the new era, and try out some of these phrases on your kids today. Chances are, everyone in your home will be happier—and more cooperative—without “Because I said so!” ever crossing your lips.

Source: McCreedy, Amy. (2022, January 3). **4 Things to Say Instead of “Because I said so”** Retrieved from [positiveparentingsolutions.com/parenting/ updating-because-i-said-so-four-things-to-say-instead](https://positiveparentingsolutions.com/parenting/updating-because-i-said-so-four-things-to-say-instead)

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.





HEALTH & SAFETY: Helping Children Cope with Change

Learn how you can help your child cope with the big and small changes in life. Reduce your child's stress and teach them how to thrive when change happens. Most of us, and especially children, appreciate some level of predictability in our lives. Children need time to process all the information that they are exposed to and appreciate daily routines that offer a sense of security and safety.

So how then do we help children handle change—both the big changes (new sibling, family illness, new school, missed playdate) and the little changes (new breakfast foods, new morning routine, new shoes)?

Tips for Helping Children Cope with Change

According to a growing body of research, kids learn how to cope with change and ups and downs of life by developing resilience. For years it was considered one of the inherent traits we were all born with but psychologists today now know that it's one of the most important qualities parents can teach their kids (along with compassion). And how do they learn it? Apparently by watching us. Studies have shown that children as young as two years old copy the coping, stress-management and thinking styles of the adults around them. And they can sense if parents are anxious or worried and will tend to mimic that.

Other studies have found that there is strong evidence that good early relationships with carers can help make children more resilient. And the earlier this resilience-building is started the better. Reinforcing this "it starts at home" message, Andrew Fuller, consultant psychologist for The Resilience Foundation and author of *Tricky Kids*, says resilient parents raise resilient kids. "When your child needs you to help them make sense of the changes that might be happening, that is not the time to confront your own inner demons," he says. "It's a handy skill for parents to learn to hold their own anxieties in check." Fuller describes resilience as "the happy knack of being able to bungee jump through the pitfalls of life".

Simple tips on helping kids to cope

- Give them a sense of being loved by their family and of belonging
- Encourage a diverse group of friends – both for them and the family as a whole
- Enjoy family rituals – like Sunday night dinner, or a weekend drive

Top 5 practical coping skills

Give advanced warning. Like adults, no child will cope well with change being sprung on them. If you can, start talking through the changes early so they can get their head around it as well as formulate all those aforementioned questions.

Maintain consistency. try not to change everything at once. If you have routines in place like bedtime rituals, the books you read even the TV shows you all watch, try to keep those in place where possible.

Answer questions. Children often have many questions and may ask the same question repeatedly. This is one-way children gain mastery over a situation and build resilience. Keep answers simple, age-appropriate, and positive. Be honest if you don't know the answer to a question.

Accept grieving. when any of us move, change schools, or make any kind of change in life, we leave something behind. Let your littlies talk about what they miss and don't try to point out all of the wonderful things about new house, school, bedroom or whatever - let them appropriately mourn what they have lost.

Read children's picture books. Reading books together is one way to restore a sense of connection, safety, and peace. Read a wide range of books, including a few that relate to your specific situation. Look for books with adult and child characters who work together to overcome difficult things.

Play together. Play is one of the best ways for children to work through stress and change. Head outside for a game of tag or gather some leaves. Make cookies, play a board game or engage in pretend play. Play is good for both children and adults!

Be prepared to weather the change. Many kids don't adapt immediately and there may be tears and tantrums, followed by major parental guilt. Expect that it can take time for children to adjust.

Source: Baker, Fiona. (2015). **Helping kids cope with change.** Retrieved from <https://www.kidspot.com.au/parenting/helping-kids-cope-with-change/news-story/0e2c2887df9e1c4a8af1140444fafa5c>



LET'S RE-FOCUS ON REDUCING

Has COVID-19 changed your sustainable focus? Amid understandable concern over health and hygiene during the pandemic, the problem of disposable plastics has taken a back seat. Demand for products such as disposable wipes, cleaning agents, hand sanitiser, disposable gloves and masks is at a record high. Unfortunately, they're also being thrown out in unprecedented volumes.

So what can you do now that the immediate threat is beginning subside? reuse what you have, and try to store rather than throw out items for donation or recycling.



Try to re-engage your old routines.

1. Remember your reusable coffee cups (if your local café allows it).
2. Use your own shopping bags, if need be wash them or use bags on rotation allowing 3 days between uses.
3. Purchase bulk fruit and vegetables from local growers.

<https://theconversation.com/using-lots-of-plastic-packaging-during-the-coronavirus-crisis-youre-not-alone-135553>



STEM

STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math. Skills developed by students through STEM provide them with the foundation to succeed at school and beyond. young children learn through active exploration—and the drive to observe, interact, discover, and explore is inherent in their development.

During the earliest years, infants and toddlers develop 700 neural connections every second,” Buchter said. “These biologically driven neurological processes and natural curiosity of how the world works make early childhood an optimal time to introduce children to scientific inquiry.”

What does STEM look like in Early Learning Settings?

- Cooking activities
- Nature walks
- Challenging building activities
- Grocery store exploring
- Water play

National Quality Framework | Quality Area 1:
Educational Program and Practice

1.1 The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.

1.2 Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.

University of Nevada. (2020, January 15). The Issues: Why STEM Education Must Begin in Early Childhood Education
Retrieved from <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/issues-why-stem-education-must-begin-early-childhood-education>

HAPPY

BIRTHDAY

All of the staff and children at Smarty Pants ELC would love to wish a very Happy Birthday to the following people for the month of February.

February 3rd - Stella

February 6th - Maggie

February 7th - Kade

February 11th - Ryatt

February 13th - Xavier

February 20th - Charlie

February 22nd - Zaki

February 24th - Miss Nicky

February 26th - Quinn

5 Minute MOVES

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

Feedback 
is always welcome