

YESTERDAY IS HISTORY; TOMORROW IS A MYSTERY BUT TODAY IS A GIFT. THAT'S WHY IT'S CALLED THE PRESENT.
MASTER OOGWAY | KUNG FU PANDA



ON *this* MONTH



AT SMARTY PANTS ELC

First day back-----4

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Kid Inventors Day ----- 17

Australia Day ----- 26



What's new at Smarty Pants?

Happy New Year, everyone! Welcome to a fresh new year! 2022 is sure to be full of fun and surprises! We would first like to welcome back all of our current clientele and children for another fabulous year and extend a very warm welcome to all of our new families who will be joining us in stages over the next couple of weeks! We cannot wait to watch you grow! We would also like to welcome Lee-Anne and Shendie to our team...both of whom bring an abundance of knowledge and experience with them as they join our centre. We are looking forward to having you as an embedded part of our Smarty Pants family!

We will also be waving goodbye to Holly this month as she heads off on Maternity Leave to have her twin daughters!

Just a few small reminders for all parents/carers:

- Please ensure that your child arrives each day with a water bottle, hat, bag packed with spare clothing and bed sheets. All clearly labelled.
- We strongly encourage that toys from home do not come into the centre as we cannot take responsibility for things going missing or becoming broken. Any items brought in are entirely at one's own risk.
- Please ensure that your child comes in each day with a layer of sunscreen applied. We top this up at around midday but do not do a morning application unless absolutely necessary.
- Please ensure you have updated your child's details with the office staff is necessary



AUSTRALIA DAY – JANUARY 26

Australia Day is a day to reflect, respect and celebrate the Australian spirit and the best of this country – our mateship, our sense of community and our resilience. We find optimism and hope as we look to the future.

Reflect. Respect. Celebrate. We *reflect* on our nation’s past, which began more than 65,000 years ago, and the impact of European settlement on the First Nations Australians. Our national day is a time, above all, for inclusion and respect. It enables us to pause, listen and gain a greater understanding of First Nations Peoples, culture and heritage as we work towards reconciliation. We aim to respect the contributions of all Australians, and we celebrate our achievements by coming together and connecting with family, friends and the community.

How will you celebrate this year? Go to your local council website to find events happening near you.



BIRCHER MUESLI



PREP 10 min | COOK 10 min SERVES 4

Summer mornings call for easy breakfasts! Give this Bircher a try. Set and forget. Make a big batch and your breakfast is good to go. Here’s how:

INGREDIENTS

- 4 tbsp hemp seeds
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 cup Greek or coconut yoghurt
- 1/4 cup choice of milk
- 2 scoops vanilla protein powder (optional)

To serve:

- 1/2 cup fresh fruit: such as berries, banana, passionfruit, mango, grated apple
- Drizzle of pure maple syrup or raw honey (if needed to sweeten)

METHOD: The night before, mix the hemp seeds, chia seeds, yoghurt, milk and protein powder into a bowl or jar and allow to set in the fridge overnight. In the morning, serve with the fresh fruit and the sweetener. Store in the fridge for up to 3 days.

*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.*

App reviews

Make the eating part of weeknights easier. Here are some great apps that help organise mealtimes!



TASTY: RECIPES, COOKING VIDEOS

BUZZFEED | FREE

Meet your new cooking coach! Over 4000 Tasty recipes at your fingertips with a innovative step-by-step instruction mode.

Search recipes by what matters to you such as dietary needs like vegan and gluten-free, difficulty, cuisine, and more. Use the “What’s in Your Kitchen” feature as a way to search for recipes in the Tasty app based on the ingredients you already have at home! Simply check 3 ingredients you want to use and see recipes you can prepare without having to go out to the store.

WHISK: RECIPES & MEAL PLANNER

WHISK FOOD | FREE

Found a recipe on the internet that looks great? Yum! Add it to Whisk and start creating your personal cookbook.

Pull recipes from any website or cooking site/app, substitute ingredients, adjust serving sizes or, if you want to, just change the way the recipes are written. No need to continue memorizing the recipe edits or writing them down on paper.

YUMMLY

YUMMLY

Yummly is your smart cooking sidekick, offering personalised guidance every step of the way. From recipe recommendations just for you, to handy tools and helpful videos. Schedule a recipe

to the exact time you want to eat and it's instantly added to your calendar. You'll even get a gentle nudge when it's time to start cooking. Add entire recipes to your grocery list. Yummly automatically categorizes your list by both aisles and recipes to make your trip to the grocery store a snap. Track nutrition and servings of what you eat with Yummly's integration with Apple Health App on each recipe page and so much more.



FOCUS: How to Create an Inviting Play Space

“EEEKKK! My kids are running around like crazy people and there is CRAP everywhere!

Been here?

Yep! I have too. WAYYYY too often. It seems like no matter what you say the entire house becomes a playground full of kid’s toys, craft and stuff!

I don’t know about you but I find this so challenging and frustrating, and frankly having a mess everywhere stresses me out.

So, I went on a mission to find a solution, and today I’m sharing my 6 top tips that helped create a playspace that saved my sanity and will hopefully save yours!

OK, are you ready? Here goes.

STEP 1: Choose a location that works for you. There are countless areas where you can set up a play space, but think about a convenient place that works for you, and gives your kids a chance to play independently, a space where you can perhaps read a book or keep an eye on your children whilst making dinner. For me it was the corner of the lounge room.

STEP 2: Designate the space with a rug or play mat and make it cosy Knowing that this is a space for play, mess and toys will help keep your stress levels down and all the “stuff” in one area. Placing a rug or play mat down helps show your little one the boundaries without the need to put up a gate. Adding soft cushions or a tent can make the space feel safe and cosy. I used a rug and a single arm chair so I could sit but not necessarily be part of the play.

STEP 3: Set up shelves and storage tubs at their level When you are selecting items to put out for your little one, put them at a level at which they can independently retrieve them. You want to minimise their need to rely on you, thus fostering their independent choice and child-led play. Keep things on the floor or on low, open shelves. Then, at the end of an activity, (if they are old enough) get them to help you put everything away in the storage tubs. By having a place for everything, your little one knows where to find it and where to replace it. Tubs and baskets without lids seemed to work best for me.

STEP 4: Display 6-8 toys at a time, and rotate the rest each month Keep a few toys and books in your play space and a few more in your storage tubs. Then hide the rest away. Having only a few toys to choose from will help your little one focus as they play. An uncluttered environment helps them build an internal sense of order and calm. With the burden of overstimulation lifted, they are free to learn from and appreciate each toy they endeavour to engage with. This really was the key to success and it made pack up so easy.



STEP 5: DO A CLEAN OUT and aim for open-ended toys This is really the big one. We get given so much stuff, especially when our babies are just born or for their birthdays. Once a year, aim to do a clean out. When surveying toys, consider whether they inherently provide opportunities for your baby to use their imaginations, creativity or problem-solving skills — or if, conversely, they essentially do the “work” for them. Many toys capture kids’ attention at first because they are flashy and make noise, but after just a few minutes, they’ll get tossed aside because there is not much else to do with them. Let these ones go.

Blocks and stacking toys, kitchen play, dolls, arts and crafts, nature-based toys, and puzzles are some examples of open-ended toys that tend to provide for more learning experiences and extended periods of quality play. I literally donated 3 bags of toys to our local Toy Library of plastics and what I call “quick fix” toys - those that do the work for them. Providing my kids with only open-ended toys has made play much deeper and more creative.

STEP 6: Set up invitations to play Whenever possible, set up invitations to play in your play space. You could do this when your little one is having a nap or ready for when they first wake up in the morning.

This gives them something to look forward to and also fosters some time for independent play. I still play our play every morning even though my kids are older. It is a saving grace as I know I am giving them the 10 minutes of undivided attention they need each day to feel loved, valued and seen.

Creating this designated play space was a real game changer for me and my family. I found the kids soon got the hang of packing away at the end of the day and they enjoyed feeling responsible and proud of their space. They also knew where to find everything so there was a lot less “MUM, Help!”

Source: Gualtieri, Bianca. (2021, September 25). **How to Create an Inviting Play Space.** Retrieved from <https://happylittlepeople.co/blogs/resources/how-to-create-an-inviting-play-space>

CALENDARS



Learning about calendars with your child helps toddlers learn and become familiar with temporal concepts, new vocabulary, number sequencing and patterns.

You can talk about each month in the year, which are summer months, which are Winter. When is your birthday, when is your siblings’ birthdays? Write in special dates and countdown to big events. You might even like to create your own, you can use a WORD template or create one and have it printed through **VISTA print**.

Image: Vista Print





HEALTH & SAFETY: 5 Ways to Practice Gratitude with Your Kids

This time of year, we're frequently reminded to give thanks for the good things in our lives. But when decorations come down and school starts back up, the prompts to practice gratitude fade away. So, how can we rewire our brains to recognize goodness year-round? To find out, we collected tips from gratitude guru and fellow parent Maryam Abdullah.

1. Discover what gratitude means for your family.

Gratitude can be a difficult concept for adults to grasp — let alone little ones. Maryam says **gratitude is really about recognizing goodness outside of ourselves**. Goodness can be big things, like happiness, love, family, and health. It can also be small things, like hugs, green lights, and ice cream. It's up to you to decide the goodness you want to recognize. Once you understand how gratitude aligns with your own values, you can start talking about it with your kids.

2. Share how goodness makes you feel. Practicing gratitude doesn't always have to be a formal act of recognition. It can be as simple or easy as thanking your child for a hug or kiss. Maryam says since children aren't necessarily able to verbalize things, parents should show their kids how to practice gratitude by doing it themselves.

"Parents can start demonstrating gratitude with babies before they speak their first word. And then once they become verbal, I think it's important to practice saying thanks to one another as a family. And not just saying thanks but actually describing how you feel."

Talking about how goodness makes us feel can help us better understand and manage our emotions. Maryam shared a simple example of how parents can show gratitude after a moment of goodness.

Goodness: Your neighbour came by and dropped off some tomatoes.

Recognition: I feel so thankful that she's our neighbour and that she's someone who shares with us. I feel so happy to be able to receive these gifts from her.

3. Ask your kids about their gratitude. Kids aren't always great at describing their feelings, so Maryam recommends sparking conversations based on four parts that make up the gratitude experience:

- What we **NOTICE** in our lives for which we can be grateful
- How we **THINK** about why we have been given those things
- How we **FEEL** about the things we have been given
- What we **DO** to express appreciation in turn



Maryam says asking Notice-Think-Feel-Do questions is a simple way to scaffold your child's understanding or perception of something that's good in their life.

NOTICE: I noticed that grandma brought you this new book.

THINK: What do you think about that?

FEEL: How does that make you feel?

DO: Is there something you want to do, to show them how you feel about receiving this new book?

4. Encourage your kids to document their gratitude. Along with prompting conversations, Maryam tells us parents can encourage their children to practice gratitude on their own through activities or rituals. Here are some easy ideas:

Gratitude Journal "Recognizing goodness in writing can be a ritual in the morning when they wake up or in the evening as a reflection about how the day went." **Photo Essay** "If writing isn't the right activity for your child, they could take pictures of things that they're grateful for and build up a library of photos of the good things and gifts in their lives."

5. Practice turning gratitude into a habit. Each time you demonstrate and talk about gratitude with your kids, you're helping them build valuable skills for their emotional toolbox. Maryam suggests trying to work gratitude into your family's daily rituals with activities.

"At the dinner table, have each family member talk about three good things they experienced that day. This can spark conversation between parents and children in ways that may be just really sweet and tender. It also could be a way for parents to get a glimpse of what's meaningful to their child."

Creating good habits is easier said than done. So be kind to yourself through the process!

Source: Abdullah, Maryam. (2021, October). 5 Ways to Practice Gratitude with Your Kids. Retrieved from <https://www.kiwico.com/blog/parent-tips/5-ways-to-practice-gratitude-with-your-kids>



NEW YEAR CLEAR OUT WITH UPPAREL

Next time you do a cupboard clear out use UPPAREL. Textile waste needs radical intervention now. We need to dramatically extend product life and stop textiles from going to landfill. We need to move mountains, not make more.

Go to UPPAREL and book your pickup. Simply choose your weight and how many boxes you need collected.

upparel.com.au





ART AND CRAFT

Art is a natural activity to support this free play in children. The freedom to manipulate different materials in an organic and unstructured way allows for exploration and experimentation. These artistic endeavours and self-directed explorations are not only fun, but educational as well. Art allows youth to practice a wide range of skills that are useful not only for life, but also for learning. So why is art so important for pre-schoolers?

Skills youngsters practise when participating in art activities include:

Fine motor skills - Grasping pencils, crayons, chalk and paintbrushes helps children develop their fine motor muscles. This development will help your child with writing, buttoning a coat and other tasks that require controlled movements.

Cognitive development - Art can help children learn and practice skills like patterning and cause and effect (i.e., "If I push very hard with a crayon, the colour is darker."). They can also practice critical thinking skills by making a mental plan or picture of what they intend to create and following through on their plan.

Math skills – Children can learn, create and begin to understand concepts like size, shape, making comparisons, counting and spatial reasoning.

Language skills – As children describe and share their artwork, as well as their process, they develop language skills. You can encourage this development by actively listening and asking open-ended questions in return. It is also a great opportunity to learn new vocabulary words regarding their project (i.e., texture). In addition to helping youth develop important skills, free expression is also good for overall health and well-being. Giving your child a creative outlet can help relieve stress and work through things happening in their lives. By encouraging artistic expression, you can help facilitate learning.

Source: <https://montessorirocks.org/importance-art-preschoolers/>

National Quality Framework | Quality Area 1:

Element 1.1 – *Program*. The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.



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 January...

Miss Andrea for the 4th

Aubrey who is turning 1 on the 9th

Angus who is turning 2 on the 17th

Rinoa who is turning 2 on the 25th

Henry W who is turning 1 on the 29th

Stella who is turning 4 on the 17th

Luna-Rose who is turning 5 on the 15th

Miss Molly G for the 28th



5 Minute MOVES

NINJA WARRIOR

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

Create a Ninja Warrior obstacle course in your backyard! Your home is full of objects you can use for the course, buckets, ladders, play equipment, heavy cans, ropes, hula hoops. You can also mix the obstacle race with a treasure hunt. Include obstacles that involve agility, jumping, balancing, climbing, crawling, strength and teamwork. Check for safety and have fun!



Smarty Pants
Early Learning Centre



Feedback is always welcome 

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