

# We're getting ready

A GUIDE TO HELP PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS PREPARE CHILDREN FOR A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH INTO THE KINDERGARTEN ADVENTURE.

Starting kindergarten is a new adventure for children and their parents. It is important that our children are excited and proud to walk through the classroom door ready to take their place in the 'big kids' school.



We are pleased to provide this collection of learning experiences for you and your child to enjoy as we also get ready to welcome you into our school community.



Community of Catholic Schools  
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

# Get cooking



LET YOUR CHILD JOIN YOU IN THE KITCHEN TO MAKE THESE FUN AND HEALTHY MUFFINS THAT WILL KEEP BOTH THEIR HANDS AND BRAINS BUSY!

## BLUEBERRY/BANANA MUFFINS

### Ingredients

- 2¼ cups self-raising flour
- 90g butter, chopped
- ¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 125g fresh blueberries OR
- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten



### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C / 160°C fan-forced.
2. Grease a 12-hole, ⅓ cup-capacity muffin pan.
3. Sift flour into a bowl. Using fingertips, rub butter into flour until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in sugar.
4. Make a well in centre of flour mixture. Add fruit, milk and eggs. Gently stir until just combined. Spoon mixture into prepared pan.
5. Bake for 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted into a muffin comes out clean. Stand in pan for 5 minutes.
6. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool and serve.

# & learning...

INVOLVING YOUR CHILD IN THE KITCHEN EQUIPS THEM FOR A HEALTHIER LIFE. IT'S ALSO A GREAT WAY TO HELP THEM LEARN. KIDS WHO COOK DEVELOP CONFIDENCE, SELF-ASSURANCE AND A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD.

Preschoolers are hard at work on their fine motor skills, so this is a good way to give them detailed practice, although they'll still need lots of help and supervision!



## What can your child learn?

### Maths and science

Measurement and volume is made simple when baking, and watching muffins rise is a pretty cool science lesson!

### Health, hygiene and nutrition

Discuss why we eat the foods we do – what foods go well together and what we need to include for a balanced meal. Show your child how to handle food and clean up.

### Manners and social niceties

Gently remind your child to say please and thank you. Enjoy sharing food as a family and take the chance to talk to one another.

## What can your child do?

- Measure and level the dry ingredients (flour, sugar)
- Chop butter with a plastic knife
- Wash and dry the blueberries
- Mash the banana with a fork
- Pour and measure the milk
- Crack and beat the eggs
- Sift the flour
- Add ingredients into the bowl
- Stir the mixture
- Set the timer
- Rinse lightweight dishes or help load the dishwasher
- Wipe bench tops clean
- Set the table

# Get writing



PROVIDING YOUR CHILD WITH RICH WRITING EXPERIENCES LAYS A FOUNDATION FOR LITERACY LEARNING. EARLY WRITING SKILLS INCLUDE UNDERSTANDING THAT LETTERS MAKE SOUNDS AND WORDS ARE MADE OF LETTERS.

## Help your child get ready to write

Here's what your child needs to get ready to be a writer:

- The chance to watch you write shopping lists, notes and other stuff.
- Lots of chances to write with you. Children like to scribble, draw and pretend-write with markers, crayons, sticks in the dirt... and especially pencils and pens like grown ups! Whiteboards and markers make it easy for them to practise letter formation.
- Encouragement to draw pictures with more and more details.
- The chance to watch you write down stories they tell you, the cute things they say, or their feelings (e.g. when sad or happy).
- Help learning to write the letters of their name. At first, they'll write them really big and all over the paper. Don't worry, they'll learn to write smaller and in a straight line by the age of 5 or 6.

HELP YOUR CHILD NAME EACH LETTER OF THE ALPHABET.  
POINT OUT AND TRACE THE LETTERS IN HIS/HER FIRST NAME.



# & learning...

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee

Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj

Kk Ll Mm Nn

Oo Pp Qq Rr

Ss Tt Uu Vv

Ww Xx Yy Zz

# Get making



ART AND CRAFT PROJECTS ARE A FAVOURITE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ANY CHILD. THEY HELP CHILDREN TO LEARN ABOUT SELF-EXPRESSION AND ARE ALSO A GREAT WAY TO DEVELOP FINE MOTOR SKILLS AND HAND-EYE COORDINATION.

## Easy play dough recipe

2 cups plain flour  
1 cup salt  
1 tbs oil  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cold water

Combine plain flour and salt. Add water and oil. Mix until well combined. Knead.



## Benefits of play dough

Playing with play dough and the repetitive moulding and manipulating gives fine motor muscles a real work out!

It also provides opportunities for:

- Self-expression
- Imagination and creativity
- Eye and hand coordination
- Problem solving
- Social interactions and communication
- Spatial awareness and shape - 2D and 3D shapes
- Language development

# & learning...

LITTLE PEOPLE LOVE TO MAKE THINGS. LET THEM GET MESSY AND ALLOW THEIR INNER ARTIST TO EMERGE! HERE ARE SOME IDEAS FOR SIMPLE ARTS AND CRAFTS.

GRAB AN OLD SHIRT OR A GARBAGE BAG WITH ARM HOLES.

## Brushes, crayons and markers

These are important in any art space. Remember, larger grip brushes, crayons and markers are easier for small hands.

## Collage and craft

Variety is the key! Collect pebbles, leaves and small twigs from the garden or park. Use feathers, pipe cleaners, glitter, string or anything that adds colour and texture.

## Paint and paint materials

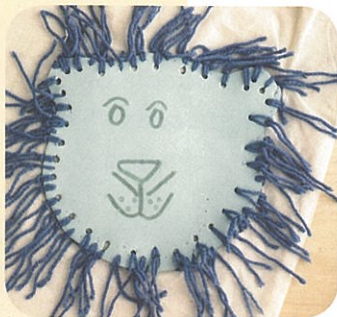
Time to get messy! Use fingers, brushes, sponges, tube paints and watercolours. Don't forget paper, paint pots and water to clean brushes and hands. An easel (or wall) will help during the creative process and also provide a handy space for artworks to dry. Your child can also paint with water.

## Paper and scissors

Stimulate your child's senses through shapes, colour texture and scale. Child-safe scissors are a great tool for developing fine motor skills and strengthening the muscles of the hand that assist with pencil grip.

## Stamps and stamp pads

A quick, easy way to create craft projects and great role-play opportunities.



# Get planting



EDIBLE GARDENING PROMOTES RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND A CHILD'S OWN RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOOD HEALTH. AS A BONUS, WHEN CHILDREN TAKE PART IN GROWING FRESH FOODS, THEY ARE MORE WILLING TO EAT THEM!

## PLANTING SEEDS WITH KIDS

### Tools:

- Biodegradable pots
- Soil and seeds
- Craft sticks or a disposable teaspoon
- Shovels or similar to scoop soil
- Spray bottle filled with water

### Top tips:

1. If you have different seeds, let your child compare them and note the difference in size and appearance of each seed.
2. Let your child scoop the soil into their pot. Count the scoops out loud.
3. Explain how the seeds need water to grow. If you have one, use a spray bottle to mist the soil, like gentle rain.
4. Help your child write the name of the plant on a craft stick and stick it in the soil.
5. Talk about how seeds need light to grow and place them on a window sill.





# & learning...

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN INVOLVED IN GARDENING, SEEING RESULTS MAY BE LESS IMPORTANT THAN EXPERIENCING THE PROCESS. REMEMBER THIS AS YOUR CHILD LEAPS INTO SOME FAVOURITE GARDEN ACTIVITIES...



## Digging

Provide spades, hoes, rakes and a dirt or mud patch in addition to the veggie garden (where you or older children might have hopes of growing something!).

## Watering

Provide small watering cans, jugs, bottles or buckets with a pouring lip. To avoid waste (and over-watering the garden), fill a few containers and explain: 'that's all for today'.

## Moving

Being active is one of the many joys of being outdoors. Provide small-sized wheelbarrows, logs, plastic pots and other items for your child to handle.

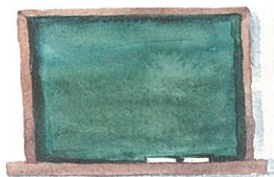
## Getting dirty

Is all part of the fun! So provide appropriate clothing for messy activities.

IT GETS YOUR CHILD OUTSIDE AND IT'S COST FREE!



# Get moving



CHALK IS AN INEXPENSIVE AND FUN WAY TO LIVEN UP ANY DAY! ALL IT TAKES IS A DRIVEWAY OR FOOTPATH AND SOME CHALK TO SPARK YOUR CHILD'S IMAGINATION!

## ACTIVE GAMES WITH CHALK

### A-Maze

Have your child design a web of squiggles, circles and other lines to create a maze through which they can walk, run, cycle or scooter. The bigger, more colourful and more intricate the maze, the more fun kids will have working their way through it.

### Bullseye

Draw up a dart board then collect some pebbles or clothes pegs and have a round of darts with a difference!

### Outdoor sports

Don't have the room in the backyard for a tennis court? Want to play a round of volleyball or soccer? No problem. Draw up a makeshift outdoor court in the driveway!

### Traffic school

Make a big chalk road network complete with traffic lights and pedestrian crossings to walk or ride through at home. It's fun, teaches road safety and really gets kids moving!

### Twister

Create a simple chalk twister board with four colours and four shapes. Then help your child follow instructions such as 'left foot to red square!' or 'right hand to green circle!' until they're in a complete twist.

### Watch out!

Draw 'beaches' or 'riverbanks' various distances apart. Then draw water and shark fins or crocodile jaws in between... wait to see what happens.

# & learning...

ALL CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM BEING ACTIVE EVERY DAY. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY KEEPS THEM FIT AND HEALTHY AND ALSO ENHANCES THEIR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT.



## Skills your child will learn

### Locomotor skills

Running, jumping, hopping, galloping, skipping and leaping.

### Balance skills

Movements where the body remains in place, but moves around its horizontal and vertical axes.

### Ball skills

Catching, throwing, kicking, striking and underarm roll.

## Benefits for your child

- Stronger muscles and bones
- Leaner body because exercise helps control body fat
- Lower likelihood of becoming overweight
- Decreased risk of developing type 2 diabetes
- Lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels
- Improved posture and flexibility
- A better outlook on life

CHILDREN AGED THREE TO FIVE YEARS SHOULD BE ACTIVE FOR AT LEAST THREE HOURS THROUGHOUT A DAY IN STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES AND FREE PLAY SESSIONS.

# Get reading



READING WITH YOUR CHILD IS ALL ABOUT SPENDING SPECIAL TIME TOGETHER, AND HAVING FUN BY ENJOYING THE LANGUAGE AND ILLUSTRATIONS IN PICTURE BOOKS.

CHECK YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY FOR PRE-SCHOOL STORYTIMES AND THESE GREAT TITLES:

**Are we there yet?** by Alison Lester

**Dear zoo** by Rod Campbell

**Early learning big book of Australian nature** by Steve Parish

**Five little ducks** illustrated by Dan Yuccarino

**God knows all about me** by Claire Page

**The Hairy Maclary collection** by Lynley Dodd (e.g. Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy, Schnitzel von Krumm and Dogs never climb trees)

**Handa's hen** by Eileen Brown

**Koala Lou** by Mem Fox

**One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish** by Dr Seuss

**Possum magic** by Mem Fox

**Rosie's walk** by Pat Hutchins

**Squish rabbit** by Katherine Battersby

**Ten in the bed** by Penny Dale

**The cat in the hat** by Dr Seuss

**The very hungry caterpillar** by Eric Carle

**The wheels on the bus** by Penny Dann

**We're going on a bear hunt** by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury

**Where's spot?** by Eric Hill

**Who sank the boat?** by Pamela Allen

# & learning...

SHARING STORIES, TALKING AND SINGING HELPS YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT. YOUR CHILD BECOMES FAMILIAR WITH SOUNDS, WORDS, LANGUAGE AND, EVENTUALLY, THE VALUE AND JOY OF BOOKS. HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU MAKE THE MOST OF READING TIME.



## Looking at the book

Before you start, ask your child some questions about the book:

- What do you think the story is about?
- Who might be in it?
- What do you think will happen?

## Reading the story

- Vary the pace of your reading, as well as how loudly you read.
- Change your voice and expression for different characters.
- Encourage your child to use a finger to trace the words.
- Let your child turn the pages of the book.
- Ask your child some questions about the story, e.g. 'Who has the ball?', 'What did he say?'
- Chant or sing repetitive phrases and words together.

## Looking at letters, words and punctuation

- Point out the differences between letters and words, and the difference between lower-case and capital letters.
- Point out punctuation marks such as full stops, exclamation marks and question marks. Explain what they mean, e.g. 'This is a question mark. It shows that somebody is asking a question'.
- Ask questions about the names and sounds of letters.
- Play 'find the letters and words' games, especially with letters in your child's name.

# Get counting



TEACH YOUR CHILD TO DO MATHS ALL DAY LONG!  
CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS BUSY FILLING THEIR  
MINDS WITH SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SENSATIONS  
THEY STORE FOR LATER LEARNING, SO HELP THEM  
BE ACTIVE EXPLORERS AND PROBLEM SOLVERS.

## Tips for parents

- Read picture books that have counting opportunities.
- Play games, including card games, board games and active games.
- Count groups of objects up to about 10 by touching each item once and only once.
- Sort things into groups that are 'similar' and 'different' and talk about why.
- Set up a shop, play corner or creative space that allows for children to play with money, calculators and everyday items.
- Use words that talk about mathematical ideas such as 'biggest, long, light, round, straight'.
- Have experiences with writing some numerals, such as age, house or phone number.
- Count and sort everyday objects and do jobs such as setting the table, cooking and gardening.
- Hang, fold and sort pairs of socks.
- When doing the washing, count or group the coloured pegs.
- Put together and explore puzzles.



# & learning...

YOU NEED TO BE CONFIDENT AT MATHS SO YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE TOO!  
TELL YOUR CHILD THEY CAN DO MATHS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO EXPLORE AND INVESTIGATE NUMBERS. IT'S AMAZING HOW MANY ACTIVITIES YOU WILL FIND IN YOUR HOME OR OUT AND ABOUT THAT INVOLVE 'MATHS' THINKING.



## Find things around the house to help:

- Toys with pieces that stack from largest to smallest.
- Shape-sorting toys with pegs and holes that have different sizes, shapes and colours.
- Boxes, bowls, measuring cups or plastic tubs along with different materials such as sand or water that children can use to fill and empty containers.
- Felt or magnetic boards with a variety of geometric shapes and sizes.
- Wooden blocks and blocks that join together in different ways.
- Large beads of different colours, sizes and shapes for stringing patterns.
- Collections of different but related objects such as coins, buttons, keys, plastic lids, stamps, nuts and bolts – to sort in different ways.

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# 'Get ready' checklist

## THINGS YOU'LL NEED FOR SCHOOL:

- School uniform (summer, winter, sports).
- Sun hat (will be part of the uniform and available from the school).
- School shoes and running shoes (try Velcro if they can't tie laces).
- Back pack (may be part of the uniform and available from the school).
- Lunchbox (get your child to choose one they can open).
- Drink bottle.
- Raincoat.
- Art smock (an old shirt will do).
- Library bag.

## ON THE FIRST DAY:

- Be positive and happy about the first day with your child.
- Let your child dress themselves as much as possible.
- Tie long hair back or plait hair.
- Apply sunscreen to your child and remind them to wear their hat when outside.
- Help your child to pack their lunch including a healthy snack and drink.
- Take lots of photos!
- Show your child where you will meet them at the end of the school day.
- Organise a special outing after school that day.
- Talk to your child about what happened at school.

