

Little Green Steps

Western Australia

Time of *Djilba* and *Kambarang* in the Noongar calendar

A little Up-Date

“Spring is here and we are very excited to share some interesting articles, great resources and some very exciting news with you all! We have been busy running workshops, networking and developing our new up and coming website and membership program!”

2014 Science Expo – A Touch of Science

For the second year in a row, on Sunday August 17th, Little Green Steps WA had a stall at the



annual Science Expo run by AAEE-WA. This year we celebrated the “Touch of Science” and encouraged families to explore science through their sense of touch. Once again, we ran a ‘Creative Play’ section with lots of cardboard boxes that allowed kids of all ages to do whatever they liked, exploring their own creativity. I had a lot of fun watching all the different ideas and ways children (and children at heart) used the boxes. Such a simple concept and a perfect example

of how there is no need to always have electronic items and the latest toys - just the outdoors and some cardboard boxes!

We also hosted a reading zone for those who wanted to take a moment and sit down quietly and enjoy some wonderful stories amidst all the excitement. Of course we couldn’t help ourselves but also coaxed people to come in and touch all of the local plants and other natural items that we had on display. We even had some home-made slime that created a real buzz! Want to make your own slime? It’s really simply mix cornflour, water and food dye!



The event was a great success, with the best attendance to date and we are looking forward to next years’ event already.

Become a member

New Little Green Steps WA Website & Membership!

We are very excited to announce that in September we are launching our own website and long awaited membership program! We are still run through the Australian Association for Environmental Education (WA Chapter). However, due to the growing popularity of Little Green Steps WA, we are expanding.

What does a membership entail?

A membership means that you will be supporting this not-for-profit program as we continue to grow and to gain some financial independence from grant funding. Our sponsors and partners have been wonderful to us and we will continue to work with them as much as we can. However, as many of you have experiences already, budget cuts are happening everywhere which means that we need to reduce our reliance on them. We feel that this is how so we are putting our best foot forward, to be here for the long haul and continue to support you all through your journey towards sustainable practices.

As a member, you will not only be part of a unique community of people that have a focus on Education for Sustainability in the early years, but you will also have access to:

- Monthly blogs with activity ideas for you.
- Forums for you to post questions and share ideas amongst one another – great networking opportunity no matter where you are!
- Discounts on workshops and future resources.
- Printable resources and links for you to use

- Better access to assistance from the LGS WA committee
- Much more!

The above mentioned will be exclusive to members only, however the seasonal newsletters will still be available to the public and sent to those of you on this mail list as well as access to the rest of the website.

The cost of a year-long membership is very affordable at:

- \$40 - Individual (incl. Family Day Care/In-home Care)
- \$80 - Not-for-Profit Centre or School
- \$100 - Centre or School

Stay tuned for the announcement that the website and membership program are up and running!

"We're excited for you to join us on this next adventure!"



Jade Robinson Photography

Biodiversity month

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY MONTH!



Biodiversity is the variety of living things within an ecosystem. As a general rule of thumb, an ecosystem with a high level of biodiversity is considered to be better off than one with a low number as it is more resilient to a complete collapse. Think of it as 'hedging your bets'. The more species you have, the less likely the entire ecosystem will fold if one were to disappear due to, let's say a disease or infection. If you had an ecosystem that had very few species, the disappearance of one would have a much more dramatic impact. Of course, this is a very simplified way of explaining this topic, however it will hopefully help explain the importance of maintaining areas that are naturally diverse.

For its biodiversity, Western Australia is not only a very special part of our amazing country, but of the world. The south west of WA is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. This means that not only is there a huge variety of plants and animals that live there, but there is also a high level of endemic species, that is, species that are found nowhere else in the world. What this also means, is that we desperately need to ensure we look after what we have.

Simply put: if one of these endemic species disappears from WA it is gone, forever. It is essential that we pass on this respect and responsibility to care for our environment to the children in our lives. I encourage you to go outside with children and explore what you have right outside your door. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds, smell the scent of the spring wildflowers coming into blossom and take a moment to feel the different leaves on the plants around you. Take it all in, and smile. Because, chances are, there is something that you are feeling, smelling or seeing that you would not be able to if you were anywhere else in the world!

ACTIVITY: Discuss with children how "There are lots of different animals/plants and they are all important, no matter how big or small". Go outside together and count how many different plants, birds and invertebrates there are just in your own garden, park or play area.

Discuss what these animals/plants need (food, water, protection) and ways we can protect them.



Cooking with kids



IT'S SPRING!!! This means that there are many in-season fresh fruits and vegetables available at our local markets and stores. For those of you that have been busy planting and caring for your garden over winter, now is the time you will see the fruits of your labour- literally!

Fruit Pops

Here is a simple, healthy treat you can prepare with the kids for those warmer days, taking advantage of those delicious berries that are in season: Fruit Pops!

SEASONAL FRUIT GROWN IN WA

Fruits in season grown in WA are:

- apples • bananas • blackberries •
- blueberries • oranges •
- passionfruit • peaches • raspberries •
- strawberries – YUM!

What you will need:

- Blender (if you chose to use juice and chunks of fruit you won't need the blender)
- Silicone 'ice-pop' tray set note: ice trays or paper cups and 'paddle pop' sticks could be used, however try to use reusable options to reduce waste
- Access to a freezer

Method

Simply blend your chosen fruit along with some water or a cup of juice (being mindful that some juices are very high in sugar) and pour it into the moulds. Add the sticks or lids and place the trays in the freezer. The fruit pops will set overnight, or if made first thing in the morning, should be ready to be a delicious, healthy, cold afternoon treat.

The best part of this easy snack is that you can cater to the children's tastes. Involve children by allowing them to pick their fruit, pour in the mixture, press the 'on' button on the blender (with your supervision) and place the lids or sticks in the trays. If you would like to add a bit of dairy, you can follow the 'Yoghurt Pop' recipe from Jamie Oliver:

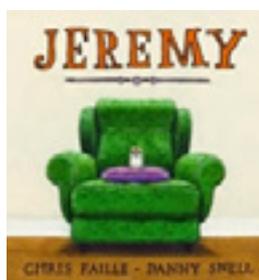
www.jamieoliver.com/us/foundation/jamies-food-revolution/recipes/YOGURT_POPS

Resources



Book Review from Your Local Librarian

Here are some of the many examples of fantastic free resources available at our local libraries that we can use to help educate our children about looking after our planet. Did you know that you can even access some of these resources online as well? Jessica Donald, Acting Young People's Services Librarian at Cockburn Libraries has written a book review and an activity for you to try with the children at home or work. Another great reason to visit your local library today!



'Jeremy' by Christopher Faille and Danny Snell. It won the Children's Book Council of Australia award for Eve Pownall Award for Information Books and is the lovely story of a family who find a baby kookaburra. The book is non-fiction and charts

the developmental changes of the kookaburra until it returns to the wild.



Activity: 'It can be hard to reduce, reuse, and recycle sometimes. However, by reusing household items you can keep young children stimulated while they learn through play. It's also a great activity for at home.

If you have old plastic jars and bottles you can make sensory bottles for babies and toddlers. These are excellent for children's development. Sensory play is anything that involves the five senses and assists with their physical, mental, and speech development.

The best thing is that you don't need anything special to make them. Once the bottle is clean fill it with things that look interesting or make noises.

One of the most popular ones we use at Pram Jams at the

library is the bubble bottle. Half fill a bottle with water, one squirt of dishwashing liquid, some food colouring, and you can add a little glitter which sticks to the bubbles if you have some. Close the bottle (we use superglue so that they cannot be opened later) and shake, shake, shake. For something so simple, there will be hours of stimulation. These can also be used to experiment with science concepts as children grow older.

For more suggestions check out our kid's blog: www.cockburnlibraries.com.au

Bush Tucker Gardens

There are many ways that sustainability fits in the NQS, EYLF and the Australian Curriculum. A lot of it can be interrelated in other departments and subjects. One way to connect Aboriginal and Indigenous studies with biology/biodiversity and even Home Economics is by creating your very own 'Bush Tucker Garden'. Teach your children about patience, caring for their plants, and how the native people of this land respected nature by only taking what they needed; leaving enough behind for future seasons and generations.

If you would like some more information on 'Bush Tucker Gardens' and plants you could use, the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) great online resources including plant fact sheets for you to use.

www.sercul.org.au/bushtucker.html

For those of you working in primary schools within the Perth region, take a moment to check out their free incursions on offer. These are very popular so you will need to book well in advance!

www.sercul.org.au/docs/PAPResourcesAvailableforSchools2014.pdf



Sharing Stories

Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

Hilary Rimmer, Manager of Riverdale Childcare Centre sent us a fantastic update on what they have been up to:

The Kangaroo room have been doing some great things with some of the items they have received from parents over the last few weeks. They encouraged the children to ask their families to bring in one recyclable item each time they came in. When they did this they were given a special sticker for their 'Nature Play Passport'.

The response has been great and educators have done some amazing things with some of the items they have collected.

The Centre also belongs to the recycling centre known as 'Remida', for an annual fee staff can go and take any items that they can use for experiences within the Centre, so this is a great source of free items. Last time the educators went, they brought back several lengths of material and were able to construct the tepee that the children have really enjoyed playing in.

Hopefully some of the photos will encourage other Centres to experiment with recycled items and see what they can construct with the children. The scope is endless!!!!

Great work Riverdale Childcare Centre! We are so proud of all your efforts and just love hearing from you. If you have any stories you would like to share, we would love to hear from you! Please send your stories to lgs@aaeewa.org.au



Call Out For Successful Stories

Have you got a great idea you would like to share with others? Had success implementing new and innovative ideas in your centre? We want to hear from you! We are calling out for short (250 word) articles to share with others on this network.

What's On?

National Water Week!

National Water Week is **October 19 – 25** so dive right in and celebrate water! Water play is an essential part of early childhood development and it is important for us to incorporate it in our children's' activities. Remember, water is a precious resource so include the children in discussions in how you can re-use or conserve the water used in play. Can it be used again tomorrow? Can it be used to water the garden? Here are some lesson plans and resources from Water Corporations education department to help get you on your way.



www.watercorporation.com.au/home/teachers/lesson-plans-and-teaching-resources/early-childhood



a documentary of a man who decides to become nature's marketing director and try to 'sell' the wonder and adventure of the outdoors to children. This movie will make you laugh out loud while talking a very concerning issue that is very close to the heart of LGS WA.

Check out the movie trailer and buy tickets here: www.facebook.com/events/768887703172685/

Creating Nature Play Spaces - a Workshop for Early Years Educators

September 15

WA Basketball Centre

201 Underwood Ave, Mt Claremont Perth, WA

Learn about creating great nature play spaces and how it links to EYLF and NQS. The presenters from this not-for-profit association are knowledgeable and engaging – a great opportunity to learn more about play in the outdoors. See more at:

www.natureplaywa.org.au/events/creating-nature-play-spaces-a-workshop-for-early-years-educators#sthash.yaw3I7XH.dpuf



Project Wild Thing

Thursday 2 October 2014 at 7.00pm

Albany Town Hall, Albany WA.

Hosted by Nature Play WA, this is a movie that explores the modern day issues of connecting children with nature-like we used to when we were growing up. It is

What's On?



Waste Wise Schools Introductory Webinar

September 8th 2014

The Waste Wise Schools Program is running an Introductory online webinar for teachers from W.A. schools who would like to find out more about the Waste Wise Schools Program and how to get their school involved.

The webinar will give an overview of what is waste and why it is a problem, the Waste Wise Schools Accreditation Process, resources available to Waste Wise schools including grants and teaching materials, and how schools can minimise their waste.

You will need to have internet access and sound on your computer to participate, or you can dial in from a landline while accessing the online powerpoint presentation.

A copy of the Waste Wise Way operating manual and a Waste Wise flash drive will be sent to you before the webinar. Please have these with you on the day as we will refer to them throughout the presentation.

A half day relief payment is available to enable two staff members from each school to participate in the webinar.

Reserve your place today!

Register for a session now by clicking the date below:

Mon, Sep 8, 2014 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM AWST

Once registered you will receive an email confirming your registration

with information you need to join the Webinar.

What's On?



Nearer to Nature
Community

Nearer to Nature's Spring Calendar is out with many activities organised for children 4+ around Perth in the holidays.

Prices range from \$12 onwards, with lots of fun options for the little ones to connect with nature. Bookings are essential.

Visit www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/n2n

Green Dates to Celebrate:

National Biodiversity Month
September

National Water Week
19 – 25th October

World Animal Day
October 4th

National Walk to Work Day
November 7th

National Recycling Week
November 10th – 16th



It's not too late to get started on your own home garden. The City of Joondalup is hosting a FREE

Food Gardens workshop:

Thursday September 11 6:30pm – 9:00pm

Free Food Gardens Workshop with Josh Byrne
Connolly Community Centre, Connolly.

City of Joondalup is also offering a tour of in Neil Hawkins Park and offering FREE Eco Home Audits. Check out these opportunities here:

www.joondalup.wa.gov.au/Live/Environment/EnvironmentalEvents.aspx

Have any questions, comments, requests for the next newsletter? Contact the Little Green Steps WA Program Manager: **Paula Kalinowski** at lgs@aaeewa.org.au

Little Green Steps WA is proudly supported by:

