The children have been cooperating, sharing and using their best manners as this term has unfolded. Children are constructing forts, cities and vehicles with the manipulative toys. Cutting, colouring and creating with paper remains popular. We have had a few ‘chill out’ afternoons with the school iPads, with a 15-20 minute time limit. The younger children have been playing pretend play with the doll’s house. We have some great imaginations!

If you have any toys in good condition you would like to donate to OOSH, we would gratefully receive them. Especially Barbie sized dolls and accessories.
APRICOT & COCONUT BLISS BALLS

PREP 15 min | COOK 15 min | SERVE 20

INGREDIENTS
1 cup (190 grams) dried apricots
1 cup (90 grams) desiccated coconut
1 cup (100 grams) almond meal (ground almonds)
1 tablespoon coconut oil, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste
2 tablespoons honey

METHOD
1. Place the apricots, coconut, almond meal, coconut oil, vanilla bean paste and honey into the large bowl of a food processor and blitz until the mixture comes together. If needed, add a splash of water until the mixture is wet enough to shape into balls.

2. Take heaped teaspoons of the mixture and shape into balls and roll in coconut until coated. These balls will keep refrigerated in an airtight container for 7 days. They also freeze beautifully, simply pop into a freezer safe bag or container and stash in the deep freeze for up to 3 months.

See this recipe in action at www.mylovelylittlelunchbox.com

SAFETY – Remember to always supervise kids in the kitchen.

Source: Recipe and images belong to mylovelylittlelunchbox

ALL MY TREASURES
Jo Witek
Best for: Anytime story

When a girl receives a beautiful porcelain box from her grandmother, she immediately wants something special to put inside it. But what could it be? What does she love best? She loves jumping in puddles on rainy days, blowing bubbles in the park and watching her little sister’s first steps. As it turns out, life’s most precious treasures cannot be contained in a box! With a gentle message about the immateriality of happiness, this story reminds us to take pleasure in everyday moments.

The bestselling Growing Hearts series explores all facets of emotional maturity for toddlers—from expecting a sibling to dealing with childhood fears. Great books for the home library.

PERFECT SQUARE
Michael Hall
Best for: Starting a conversation

A perfect square is perfectly happy. But what happens when it begins to transform into other shapes? Will it still be happy and content?

This book features early learning concepts such as colours and days of the week. It has become a classic text about shapes, but why not use it to start a conversation about what we base our feelings of happiness on?

Introduce your child to the great empowering messages of taking life’s “unperfectness” and making your own beauty out of it and the beauty of thinking outside the “box”.

CLEANUP AUSTRALIA DAY – 3RD

Rubbish we create through mass consumption is choking our streets, beaches, parks, bush land and waterways. And along the way it’s killing one of our best assets: nature. We are all part of the problem - but YOU can also be part of the solution. Because when the rubbish is gone, nature can carry on.

Learn more at www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au

NATIONAL RIDE ‘2’ SCHOOL DAY – 17TH

Celebrating National Ride2School Day is the best way to promote a healthy, active community. In 2017 we want to turn back the clock to the 1970’s and get back to a time when 80% of students walked or rode to school. Why not give it a try? Go to www.bicyclenetwork.com.au

HARMONY DAY – 21ST

Our diversity makes Australia a great place to live. Harmony Day is a celebration of our cultural diversity – a day of cultural respect for everyone who calls Australia home. ‘Everyone belongs’. Find out more www.harmony.gov.au

A pair of smiles inducing children’s picture books.
FOCUS ARTICLE: Why Dutch children are the happiest in the world.

Two toddlers have just chased each other to the top of a climbing frame and are jostling to get down the slide first. Their mothers are lost in conversation on a nearby park bench. In the distance, a dog barks and a little boy ambles along on his balance bike, trailed by his grandfather who is pushing a buggy. A gang of older children in tracksuits comes racing along the bike path, laughing and joking. They overtake a young mum who is cycling more slowly, balancing a baby in a seat on the front of her bike and a toddler on the back. A group of girls is playing piggy-in-the-middle on the grass, their joyful shreiks filling the air. Not far away, some boys are perfecting their skateboarding moves. Adults accompany none of the school-age children.

This happy scene isn’t from a movie. It’s just a regular Wednesday afternoon in springtime in Amsterdam’s Vondelpark, a scene enacted all across the Netherlands every day.

In 2013, a Unicef report rated Dutch children the happiest in the world. According to researchers, Dutch kids are ahead of their peers in childhood wellbeing when compared with 29 of the world’s richest industrialised countries. Children from the Netherlands were in the top five in each of the categories assessed: material wellbeing; health and safety; education; behaviours and risks; and housing and environment. In fact, the Dutch scored highest for behaviours and risks, as well as for education.

The Netherlands have a reputation for being a liberal country with a tolerance of sex, drugs and alcohol, yet beneath this lies a closely guarded secret: the Dutch are actually fairly conservative people. At the heart of Dutch culture is a society of home-loving people who place the child firmly at the centre. Parents have a healthy attitude towards their kids, seeing them as individuals rather than as extensions of themselves. They understand that achievement doesn’t necessarily lead to happiness, but that happiness can cultivate achievement. The Dutch have reined in the anxiety, stress and expectations of modern-day parenting, redefining the meaning of success and wellbeing. For them, success starts with happiness – that of their children and themselves.

Stress Free Schooling: In all Dutch primary schools, kids start school at four but don’t officially start structured learning – reading, writing and arithmetic – until they are six years old, in year 3. If they do show interest in these subjects earlier, they are provided with the materials to explore them for themselves. There is no pressure to learn to read and write in their first year of schooling and it appears to show no particular disadvantage if these skills are acquired later. Dutch children are among the least likely to feel pressured by schoolwork.

Happy Parents Have Happy Kids: They have a realistic perspective on parenthood and understand that they (and their children) are far from perfect. They are parents who live in the real world. That’s not to say that they don’t still struggle with the daily realities and messiness of life. But because they are more forgiving of their own imperfections and shortfalls, they’re able to enjoy parenthood. Dutch society has fought for and achieved an enviable work-life balance. They work on average 29 hours a week, dedicating at least one day a week to spending time with their children, and pencil in time for themselves, too.

On Discipline: In the Netherlands, children are encouraged to act spontaneously. Play is more important than being quietly obedient. The Dutch believe in inspiring children to explore the world around them and to learn from that. Play can be noisy and disruptive to other people. Discipline is not punishment-based. For the Dutch, it is about teaching socially appropriate behaviour. In a society without a strong social hierarchy, deferring to your elders or betters is a foreign concept. Dutch children are expected to be friendly and helpful towards their elders but not to automatically defer to them. Everyone is on an equal footing. Children are unlikely to be willfully disobedient, but they are more likely to fight their corner. Learning to put forward a good argument is seen as a useful life skill and so encouraged.

Biking in the rain: Dutch children enjoy a huge degree of freedom: they ride their bikes to school, play on the streets and visit friends after school, all unaccompanied. It’s a part of the Dutch character to go outside in all weathers. Children will happily play outside in the rain. Sporting activities are rarely cancelled due to bad weather. If it’s wet, the Dutch wear anoraks. If they’re wearing smart clothes, they learn to cycle carrying an umbrella in one hand. “There’s no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing,” Dutch parents say.

It’s all about the ‘hagelslag’: According to the 2013 Unicef report 85% of the Dutch children aged 11, 13 and 15 surveyed ate breakfast every day. Is there something special about eating hagelslag (chocolate sprinkles) for breakfast? Is that really what makes Dutch children so happy? Sitting down to eat around the table as a family, before school and the working day, is a routine that underpins Dutch family life. In no other country do families eat breakfast together as regularly as they do in the Netherlands. What the Dutch seem to understand is the importance of eating regular meals, starting with the meal that really matters: breakfast.

Dutch teenagers don’t rebel: Dutch teenagers possess a mature self-assurance. They appear to be well-adjusted children prepared to deal with the trials and tribulations of adult life. Binge drinking is not a problem among teenagers and the Netherlands has one of the lowest rates of teenage pregnancy. Although the country has a liberal approach to drug use, it’s all about the ‘hagelslag’: According to the 2013 Unicef report 85% of the Dutch children aged 11, 13 and 15 surveyed ate breakfast every day. Is there something special about eating hagelslag (chocolate sprinkles) for breakfast? Is that really what makes Dutch children so happy? Sitting down to eat around the table as a family, before school and the working day, is a routine that underpins Dutch family life. In no other country do families eat breakfast together as regularly as they do in the Netherlands. What the Dutch seem to understand is the importance of eating regular meals, starting with the meal that really matters: breakfast.

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The simple life: The norm in the Netherlands is simplicity: families tend to choose simple, low-cost activities and take a back-to-basics approach. The Dutch opt for time, not money, and practicality over luxury goods. What Dutch children grow accustomed to in childhood sets them up for life: they are pragmatic and confident, unhampered by anxieties about status.

To read this article in its entirety and for more interesting links follow the source address below.

Source: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/family/raise-worlds-happiest-children-time-went-dutch/
Attending an early-learning program such as long day care, pre-school or family day care is an important and exciting stage in a child’s development. They will have opportunities to interact with other children and educators, and benefit from a stimulating learning environment.

Some children embrace this change with an enthusiasm that can leave parents feeling confident and comfortable, and perhaps even a little left out. Other children may feel afraid, upset or anxious. It may be the first time they have been in the care of adults who are not part of their family, or the environment could be noisy and crowded compared to being at home, making it all feel a bit too much.

From about six months old, most children begin to show distress when they are away from their parents or carers, as they don't yet have a separate sense of self, so can feel a part of them is missing. While this can be worrying for parents and carers, it is normal for children to find the transition to childcare upsetting, and important to remember the distress is often short-lived. There are a number of easy things you can do to help your child settle into the new environment.

**Behaviour To Look Out For:** Not every child will find being away from their parents or carers upsetting, and not every child will respond in the same way. When children are upset, they can express this in a number of different ways, such as becoming visibly upset, and will cry or call out. Some children experience physical symptoms, headaches, nausea or tummy aches. Others may appear nervous, restless, clingy, or quiet and withdrawn.

**What Is Your Child Thinking?** When being separated from you upsets your child, it might be because they don't understand when you will come back or may feel anxious around unfamiliar people or places. Common thoughts children have in this situation are:

- 'I don’t feel safe without my mum or dad.'
- 'Something bad will happen and I may never see them again.'
- 'I’m scared and don’t know what to do.'

**What does each of these terms mean?** Well in simple terms:

- **Behavior:** to express oneself in a particular way.
- **Emotion:** a feeling one has.
- **Express:** to show or let come out.
- **Feel:** to experience an emotion or sensation.
- **Interaction:** to act or react, to do anything with.
- **Situation:** the place where you are.

**Pay Attention To Your Own Feelings**

Don’t forget that it’s not just children who can find separation upsetting. It’s also normal for parents to find the process distressing and you should make sure you have strategies to deal with this as well.

**Source:** http://www.childmags.com.au/school/0-4-years/5444-how-to-deal-with-separation-anxiety-at-childcare

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**DRY ERASE LETTERS**

**Materials:** White board marker, a window or glass door, paper towel or tissue

This activity is very simple to set up. Simply use a white board marker to write letters in a random fashion onto a glass door or window your child can safety access. Explain the activity: “I’m going to call out a letter – you need to find it and erase it!” Children will love the hunt of trying to find the letters and the fun of erasing them.

**KNOW YOUR EGG!**

Australia has a number of different systems of farming used to satisfy the varying needs of consumers. Some consumers choose their eggs by price, others are happy to pay more for eggs produced by hens that are kept in more traditional conditions.

When you buy eggs you’re met with an array of terms **caged**, **cage free**, **free range**, **barn laid**, **organic**... it can all get a bit confusing. So what do each of these terms mean? Well in simple terms:

- **Caged:** Confined to a cage, (18 hens per sqm* ethical.org.au)
- **Cage free/Barn laid:** Room to nest or perch, no outdoor access
- **Free range:** Access to outdoor range. Can be ambiguous because of loose regulations. For example the stocking density allowances can vary from 1500 – 10,000 birds per hectare.
- **Certified organic:** Access to outdoor range, hens not de-beaked.
- **COMING SOON:** Pastured eggs = Free to roam and forage.

**How do you choose?**

Apps such as CluckAR from Choice can help you make a sustainable choice. Simply download and scan your carton to find out the chook density of your chosen brand. Our advice, **do the research**. Choose a brand and learn more about their farm. There are pros and cons to each category. Support farmers who are producing eggs sustainably and know what you are feeding your little chickens.
April Vacation Care

- Please find attached our holiday program.
- Remember to book in early as numbers are limited on our fun activities.
- Our program will have a theme for the day; however we have many other activities programmed for the day.
- Clothing for the holidays
  - **sun safe clothing** – wide brimmed hat, covered body including shoulders (no thin straps)
  - **Closed in shoes** – cooking requisite, sometimes we spontaneously decide to cook.
  - **A complete change of clothes** – messy or water play will require clothes, a towel is a good option.
- St Joseph’s have pupil free days on Friday 7th April, and Monday 24th April, we are open for Vacation Care and After School Care this day.
- Further questions: Please contact us via person, text message or email (see below)

### Breakfast Around the World

**What is eaten first thing in the morning**

**Breakfast** is the most important meal of the day, keeping us healthy and sharp. But breakfast foods vary wildly from place to place. In European countries like Spain, France, and Italy, the first meal of the day is a quick piece of bread or pastry and strong coffee. Meanwhile in Korea, breakfast is a sweeping event that crowds the table just as much as dinner.

**China**: Traditional breakfasts vary by region, but the combination of fried dough sticks (or “you tiao”) and warm soy milk is beloved by millions. Dim sum and hot soups like congee are also popular.

A typical **Dutch** breakfast is ‘hagelslag’. Hagelslag is made of chocolate and you sprinkle it on a slice of bread. (Above image)

**Brazil**: Strong coffee and milk is enjoyed with a plate of ham, cheese, and bread. Feijoada, a thick soup made with black beans and different meats, is also served in the morning.

**Mexico**: The first meal of the day is hearty, with dishes like chilaquiles (below) and huevos rancheros being popular choices. Sweet rolls and coffee are lighter options.

**France/Italy**: A traditional breakfast in both countries is coffee and either baguette or croissant. Like Cubans, the French often dip their buttered bread into coffee.

**India**: Breakfasts in India vary by region, but often you’ll find a tray like this one, crowded with chutneys, dips, and breads like dosa, roti, or idli.

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

It is an old favourite that evokes happiness and movement. Find the song on YouTube or sing along. Time get silly!

**You put your right hand in, You put your right hand out, You put your right hand in, And you shake it all about, You do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself around**

**That what it’s all about.**

Left hand | right foot | left foot | head | bottom | whole self

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**Feedback is always welcome**

How can we make our newsletter even better?
What information would you like us to include?

**Saint Joseph’s After School and Vacation Care**

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