

TODAY I WILL BE HAPPIER THAN
A SEA GULL WITH A HOT CHIP

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN
APRICOT AND COCONUT
BLISS BALLS

DUTCH CHILDREN –
“THE HAPPIEST IN
THE WORLD?”

Little Assets Melbourne City



On this month

AT LITTLE ASSETS

Oral Hygiene Program for Kinder -----7th
St. Patrick's Day -----17th

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Girl's Day -----3rd
Clean Up Australia Day -----3rd
St Patrick's Day -----17th
National Ride2School Day -----17th
International Day of Happiness -----20th
World Poetry Day -----21st
Harmony Day -----21st
World Water Day -----22nd
Earth Hour -----25th
Neighbour Day -----26th

OUR INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT “CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY”

Towards the evening of Friday' 3rd of March, most of the bins in our centre will be replaced.

WTC Management have partnered with Great Forest Australia (GFA) to implement a new recycling and waste management system for the entire site.

There will be three main changes for us:

1. Landfill bins at desks will be removed. Central bins for landfill and recycling will be located in kitchens (and other central areas where necessary)
2. Each desk will have a recycling box. This box will be for paper, cardboard and mixed containers.
3. Organic recycling bins will be implemented throughout the site.

Your partnership is critical to the success of this program. Thank you in advance for being part of it!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."-Margaret Mead.





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.bicyclenet.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



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

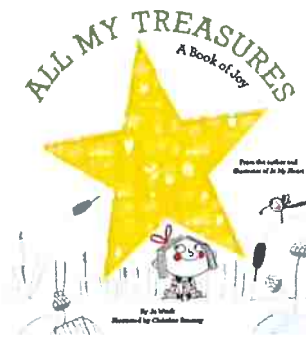
SAFETY – Remember to always supervise kids in the kitchen.



Source: Recipe and images belong to mylovelylittlelunchbox.

Book reviews

A pair of smiles inducing children's picture books.



ALL MY TREASURES

Jo Wittek
Best for: Anytime story

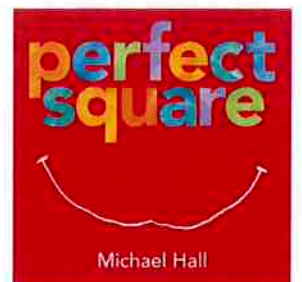
When a girl receives a beautiful porcelain box from her grandmother, she immediately wants

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".



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 shrieks 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, dedicate 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 breaks the night-time fast.

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, (some of which are readily available in 'coffee shops') this seems to have little effect on increasing the use among teens.

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/>



HEALTH & SAFETY: Separation anxiety

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 educators, 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 educators, 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 educators 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 you should do:

1. **Prepare your child:** talk about what is about to happen or what they should expect. Talk about what you will do when you see each other again.
2. **Work together:** Keep staff informed about what is happening and how your child is feeling. They are there to help.
3. **Build Trust:** Keep goodbyes short and let them know when you will be back. Don't ignore distress, respond and comfort.
4. **Build feelings of safety:** Be calm, create a regular routine, share something special just for goodbyes; a high-five, handshake...
5. **Reconnect:** When you pick your child up spend extra time with them, talk about their day and what they did.

If your child doesn't seem to be settling down over a period of a few weeks or seems to be regressing in some ways, don't panic. Talk to the service's staff, who will be able to give you insight into your child's experience and how they are responding to the new environment.

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>

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 safely 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 does 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.



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.

BITING IN CHILD CARE

It can be distressing for a parent to receive that phone call from their child care centre or the incident report during pick up time stating that their child has been bitten. It is quite normal for families to worry about their child's welfare or feel angry towards the child who has bitten and the educators in their child's room for lack of supervision.

If your child has bitten another child, you may experience the feeling of guilt and embarrassment. It's all too normal.

However, as child care professionals and parents we need to remember:

1. Biting can occur when children are teething and they may feel the urge to bite as applying pressure on gums can be comforting.
2. Mouth can be used by babies and toddlers for exploration which can turn into a bite.
3. Some children lack self-control and may bite when someone comes too close for their comfort.
4. Some children may bite to attract attention.
5. Too much excitement can also lead to biting in young children.
6. Biting can also occur when children become frustrated not being able to communicate and express what they are feeling.

How can we contribute to managing the situation?

When one child bites another, adults often find themselves paralyzed with shock and horror. We need to unfreeze and act quickly and helpfully. We need to:

- **Separate the biter from the bitten child.** Quickly defuse the situation that's prompting the biting — being jostled in a loud, crowded room, for example. Removing the biter from the source of frustration is calming and also helps the victim feel safe.
- **Help the biter understand what emotions prompted the bite and how to handle them.** Toddlers need adults' help labeling their feelings and reacting appropriately to them,
- **Console the child who has been bitten.** Offer assurance and comfort them.
- **Adults should also strive to move beyond reaction mode;** ultimately, you want to stop biting before it starts. We need to pay close attention to biting circumstances to pinpoint what specifically seems to trigger bites — other children grabbing toys, perhaps, or the chaos and noise of lunch time. Once you know what prompts the biting, you can step in to ease the tension before it occurs.

