

Babies Room July Newsletter 2010

Hello everyone,

We are now half way through the year already! and we all know what that means – cold and wet weather. Our activities and where they are set up both indoors and outdoors will vary depending on the weather. If we all need to be inside, which can be up to 16 babies and the teachers, the carer's sit down with a group of children to do an activity, such as painting, play dough, drawing, singing and dancing or reading stories, with the staff sitting at the children's level and involving them in an activity, this makes a huge difference to the noise level and calmness of the room. The children are settled because they are focused on these fun and interesting activities with the carer's. If your child has been unwell during the night or if you think is getting sick and you don't think they could cope with a day at day care, please keep them at home to make a speedier recovery and also to minimize the spread of infection to other children and staff.



Clothing



We have been experiencing some cold weather lately, so please make sure that your children have plenty of layers of clothing on and warm spare clothes in their bag. When children first arrive in the morning they are usually very eager to go straight outside. It makes it a lot easier for staff if the children are already dressed for outside play. Please provide appropriate shoes for children in their right size so they can play outside in the cold weather as only socks get wet when they go out to play. **Remember to name all items of clothing, including clothes in their bag.**

Medication / Food & Drinks



Please make sure that there are no items of food or drink or medications in your child's bag and also make sure children do not come in the centre while eating outside food. We do provide all snacks and meals here at the centre. This will help us to provide a safe environment to those children who have life threatening allergies.



Anaphylaxis

What is it? It is a rapidly progressing, life threatening allergic reaction. Symptoms include swelling lips, hives or welts, abdominal pain and vomiting. More severe reactions are difficulty/noisy breathing, swelling of tongue, wheeze or persistent cough and loss of consciousness. There are many triggers which cause anaphylaxis reactions and vary in their severity according to the individual.

There are children within the centre who have anaphylactic reactions to certain foods. This is why we continue to remind everyone who comes into the centre to be aware of medications or food that is left in children's bags. Even treats bought into the centre when picking up children could possibly be harmful to another child without realising it at the time.

Sign in/out book

As this is a legal document, we are required to have the child's full name (first and surname) documented, as well as the time they arrived and the person's signature. This is the same when signing your child out. We need the time they left and signature preferably full name of person picking up the child. Also for legal reasons we need to be aware of who is picking your child up from the centre. If we haven't had prior consent from a parent and a person has not been identified on the enrolment form, we will not let a child go into that person's care. If circumstances change, please let us know by phone prior to the person coming to the centre.

This does not include if a change of mum or dad is picking up.



Communication

It is very important that all relevant information regarding your child be passed on to the staff. This will help us to provide the best possible care for your child. Information such as any changes at home (moving house, changes in family dynamics, visitation with family members), how they slept the night before, nappy rash, illness and behavioural difficulties are all helpful in us understanding your child's temperament throughout the day.

Allowable Absence "AA"

Have you ever been asked to sign an "AA" or "Allowable Absence" and not been sure what it is?

Description from the Enrolment booklet:

"If your child is away on holidays or sick for any length of time, every effort will be made to sell your days to other clients requiring extra days of care. This facility is offered subject to your child's room being at full capacity at the time. Please always advise the Director or the Administrative Staff when your child will be away from care.

Holiday/Days off/Sickness: Childcare Benefit is paid for a child's absences from care up to **42 days per year** commencing every financial year. These absence days may be taken for any reason, and do not require supporting documentation, eg medical certificate. Public Holidays are counted as absent days and, therefore, **full fees are charged to parents for any absent days over the 42 day limit.** Once the 42 day absence limit is reached, documentation is required for childcare benefit to be paid on any absences."

When you are asked to "Sign an AA", this is for our records to document that you usually attend care on a particular day but were absent.

Tantrums

I'm sure everyone has experienced one of these at some stage, so we have included a few tips on why they occur and how you and your child can cope and even help prevent them from happening. For more information on Tantrums check the website. This information has been taken from these websites: www.cyh.com/HealthTopics and www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Kylie is now working only on Friday in Babies Room as she is going to attend school to finish her Diploma. Kathy who has been working in the room last couple of weeks will be taking over Kylie's primary children. Kathy has already formed bonds with the children and has been a great team member in the babies room.

Leanne is leaving as she has a position at Mathew Flinders Girls Secondary College. Leanne will be working in the office at the school. We wish her all the best and she will be sadly missed as she was a great asset in the room.

Please speak to Payal or staff if you have any concerns or ideas as we are always looking at ways of improving our service to you.

We are looking forward to sharing in your child's life and spending a happy and rewarding year with you and your family.

Thanks.

**Payal Mahajan
Room Coordinator & Babies Room Teachers**



Does this poem remind you of someone.....

If I want it, it's mine.

If I give it to you and change my mind later, it's mine.

If I take it away from you, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.

If you have it, it's mine.

If I saw it in your hands, it's mine.

If it's mine, it will never belong to anybody else, no matter what.

If we are building something together, all the pieces are mine.

If it looks just like mine, it's mine.

~author unknown

Tantrums

Tantrums happen when children have frustration or stress that they cannot cope with. Children react to frustration in different ways.

It is important to remember that the anger of the tantrum is always mixed with other feelings. There may be feelings such as fear, jealousy, or feeling unwanted or unloved.

- Young children often feel frustrated because there are so many things that they want to do that they can't yet do.
- In older children and teenagers it is likely to be because they feel prevented from having or doing what they want, especially if they are stressed.

Tantrums are most likely to happen in toddlers. If older children have many tantrums you need to look for a cause or talk with a health professional about it.

Little tantrums

These only last a short time and the child's feelings are not totally out of control.

- Young children do not always have the words to say what they need or want. Their world is full of bigger people telling them what to do and what not to do.
- Young children do not have many inner strengths to cope with stress and frustration.
- Sometimes children learn that busy parents are likely to give in to what they want if they 'carry on' long enough. This may mean constant asking, 'whining' or having little tantrums.
- The child is not out of control at this stage. She has learnt that tantrums work, eg she gets something if she pesters long enough.
- Sometimes little tantrums can grow into big 'boil over' tantrums.

What parents can do

Think about your child's life

What is happening in your child's life if little tantrums happen often?

It may seem as if the tantrum comes from something very small. However usually the 'something small' has come on top of a lot of other stresses or frustration in your child's life, so it becomes the thing that tips him over into a tantrum.

- Is it frustration from not being able to have or do something?
- Is it attention he needs, or is he tired, hungry or unwell?
- Are there any other stresses that could be affecting him - starting childcare, a new baby, parents arguing or parents feeling stressed or upset themselves?
- Is your life so busy that it is easier to give in to everything your child asks for?
- Are there too many "No's" in your child's life?

Try to:

- spend regular relaxed time with your child
- give him lots of room to move and explore
- notice all the good things about him and let him know that you do.

Mean what you say

- Don't give in to your child if he has a tantrum because he wants something. If the tantrum is small you might try saying "No" and giving a reason once. For example "No, you can't have a biscuit because it is almost tea time".
- Try to distract your child by giving him something else to do. Let him help you cook dinner or let him choose a snack that you approve of. This may avoid the tantrum.
- Sometimes you can just ignore little tantrums. Sometimes being busy doing something will help them blow over.
- Sometimes a child's feelings get more and more out of control until he gets into a 'boil over' tantrum. If you know the signs, step in first with whatever you know helps your child, eg relaxation, distraction, talking about his frustration.
- It is never helpful to punish or hit a child to try to stop a tantrum.

Avoiding tantrums

The best thing you can do about tantrums is to try to plan so they don't happen very often. Planning will only work if you take into account your child's needs as well as your own. The child's need may be attention, less pressure, sleep or food. What she wants might be a biscuit. Be firm about not giving the biscuit and try to be sure that her real needs are met.

- Think about what is happening in your child's life that is stressful and see if there is anything you can change.
- Make sure there are lots of positives in your child's day.
- Go on outings after sleeps and meals and not when your child is hungry or tired.
- Distract her "Look what I have got here".
- Put things that she might want, but cannot have, out of sight.
- Keep a diary for a few days - when the tantrums happen note what time of day, what you are doing when it happens and what your child is doing. If it always happens around tea time, try letting your child have her tea earlier, giving her a bath before tea, letting her help you prepare the meal, or having some special time with her at this time of day.
- Warm, gentle baths often help to settle children who are frazzled.

This way you may be able to get in first and prevent the tantrum which is much better than dealing with it when it happens.

Shopping centre tantrums

Tantrums in public are hard to cope with. Most parents feel embarrassed or may worry about others watching how they handle the situation.

- If they happen often, try to avoid taking your child shopping.
- If possible leave your children with someone else.
- If you take them to the shops, make sure they are not tired when you go.
- Take a snack for them to eat, make sure they have been to the toilet and try not to be too long.
- Let them help by getting things off the supermarket shelf for you.
- Having chats to other adults can result in young children getting bored, irritable and restless. A few minutes to you can seem like an hour to them.
- Make the shopping trip a treat for everyone by having a drink or a little time in the park afterwards.
- If a big tantrum does happen you need to be strong enough to be able to leave the shopping basket where it is and take your child out to the car or somewhere quiet until the tantrum is over.

When your child copes well tell her you are pleased that she managed so well.

Big tantrums

Big tantrums are the 'boil over' kind where children can no longer control their feelings. This kind of tantrum is very frightening for children, as well as for many parents.

When your child has this kind of tantrum she can't listen to reason. Punishments such as consequences don't work. Ignoring this kind of tantrum can be frightening for your child, because when she is out of control she needs to learn that feelings can be controlled. She needs to know that strong feelings can be managed and that you won't hurt or leave her.

What parents can do

No matter how much planning you do, some tantrums will happen.

- Let your child know that you can keep him safe and you will not punish or leave him. This is really major learning that he needs to have in order to learn to manage his own feelings.
- Don't try to reason with your child at this time, he won't be able to 'hear' you.
- Stay with your child during the tantrum. Hold him if you can. If not, stay close so you can touch him. Comfort him when the worst of the storm is over.
- Do not threaten - threatening to leave will make him feel even more upset and frightened.
- If you are unable to stay near because your own feelings are in danger of getting out of control and it is unsafe, tell your child that you will be leaving for a short time but will be back soon to look after him. Make sure he is safe and get someone else to stay with him if you can. Only do this if he is somewhere safe (eg at home). Do not leave him in a supermarket, car park or other place where he can run away.

- Talk to your child gently but firmly, about how he feels and what is happening to him. You could say “You are feeling really upset and I will stay with you until you feel better. It’s alright to cry when you feel upset, but I won’t let you hit/kick/or whatever.” You might have to hold your child to prevent this.
- It is important not to give in to whatever your child was wanting which started the tantrum. But after the tantrum has finished think about what led up to it. You may not have noticed how tired he was, or if he wanted something to eat he may have been hungry as well as tired.
- If your child is older and you can see his feelings getting out of control you might want to talk to him about going somewhere quiet until he can manage his feelings, then come and talk about it. You could go with him, or not, whichever is most helpful.
- When the tantrum is over, suggest something for him to do that you are happy with, giving both of you time to wind down. He might want to read a book, do a puzzle or go for a walk with you.
- When you manage the tantrum you teach your child that angry feelings don’t have to take over, and they can be managed and expressed in helpful ways. You are also teaching that however bad things are, you will not let him down.
- The way you handle these situations models behaviour that your child will copy.

At the start and the end of the day

- Some days are worse than others.
- If you can see at the start of the day that it is going to be ‘one of those days’ take some time to do something relaxing with your child straight away. Leave whatever you thought you had to do and see if you can make the day a better one. A small amount of time at the start of the day sometimes saves a lot of time at the end of the day.
- Avoid things which are difficult for children (such as going shopping) and make sure she gets enough to eat.
- At the end of the day, if it has felt like a bad day, make some time for doing something you both enjoy, settling down and rebuilding your relationship.
- Some relaxing activities include:
 - a walk in the park or around the block
 - sitting with your child to watch a quiet video
 - play music or dance
 - stories
 - a bath
 - massage and meditation (there are useful books for children’s meditation).

Take care of yourself

Taking care of a child who is having tantrums puts a great deal of stress on the carer. You need to look after yourself in order to be able to do this.

- Try to be creative in finding ways that will help you feel better.
- Don't spend energy feeling guilty about ignoring jobs that 'should be done'.
- Talk to your partner about your need for time and support to 'recharge your batteries'.
- If you can, get someone else to take care of your young child for a while during the day so you can take some time out for yourself.
- Sometimes just getting outdoors and having some space around you helps.
- At the end of the day after your child has settled into bed, make time for your own needs.
- If you feel things are really bad, talk to someone who understands what you're going through. This may be with a trusted friend or a professional person.

Reminders

Tantrums happen when children's feelings get out of control.

Children need to know that their parent(s) can help them to manage when their feelings are out of control.

Try to work out what are the major stresses in your child's life and do something about them.

Watch for triggers and try to get in first to prevent the tantrum from starting.

Use relaxing activities to help your child calm down.

If tantrums occur often, talk it over with a health professional.

Principles of Effective Guidance and Discipline

1. It is appropriate and necessary for children to be curious, experiment, and test the limits.
2. Discipline is not punishment but rather an opportunity to help children learn to behave appropriately.
3. Discipline includes planning; preventing problems and helping children succeed.
4. Discipline helps children learn self-control and how to get along with others.
5. The environment and routine should prevent crowding of children and other frustrations or situations that lead to inappropriate behaviour.
6. All children, including challenging ones, deserve respect at all times.
7. Labelling children is not appropriate.
8. Modelling appropriate behaviour is more effective than telling children how to behave.
9. Before intervening, give children an opportunity to work out their struggles themselves when possible.
10. Limit the use of the word No. Use alternatives such as "please stop" and "Don't splash" and tell children what to do. "Be gentle", "Use quiet voice".
11. Make adults' responses consistent in order to reinforce and redirect children's behaviour.
12. Catch children doing the right thing. Praise good behaviour and efforts to behave appropriately.