

MARCH
2025

ON *this* MONTH

Medowie Gumnut Preschool

Miss Sharon goes to Portugal 27 March
Happy Birthday Melody, Addison and Landon

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Clean Up Australia Day -----
2
St Patrick's Day -----
17
National Ride 2 School -----
21
Earth Hour -----
22

Our Philosophy Revision Process!

At Medowie Gumnut Preschool, our centre philosophy serves as the foundation for all our operations, guiding our everyday practices and decision-making. By reviewing our philosophy regularly, we ensure it continues to align with the needs of our service and all current stakeholders. We make sure to account for any changes involving children, families, educators, and leadership, allowing our philosophy to remain a dynamic and evolving document. March is an ideal time to start our review process for 2025, offering families and educators the chance to reflect on what we do and why.

This process gives us an opportunity to consider new developments and possibilities, such as recent research that informs practices, updates in legislation, professional development opportunities, policy changes, and the valuable dialogues among educators, children, and families.

Our current philosophy is attached to the back of this newsletter for you to read at your leisure. We warmly invite you to participate in this process and are eager to hear your input and any suggestions you might have.





CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY – MARCH 2

Clean Up Australia inspires and mobilises communities to improve and conserve our environment, eliminate litter and end waste. More than 22 million Aussies have participated in Clean Up Australia activities and events over the past three decades. Australia's waste challenges continue

to grow. Now, more than ever, it's time to Step Up and support solutions which move us towards a circular economy. Register a **Clean Up** or join a **Clean Up** at [Learn more here](#)

EARTH HOUR – MARCH 22

Join millions of Australians and switch off your lights on March 22. This action is symbolic and is not an action to save power. We know it will take so much more than an hour of turning our lights out to have a measurable impact on climate change, but the action helps to bring greater awareness to the issue and demonstrates your commitment to help protect the planet – both during and beyond Earth Hour. **Find out more here.**

PESTO CHICKEN TRAY BAKE



PREP 10 min | COOK 1hour 10min

INGREDIENTS

1 carrot, 1 red capsicum cut into batons
1 zucchini, cut into rounds
1 eggplant, halved and cut into half moons
1 red onion, cut into thin wedges
1 small bunch asparagus, ends trimmed and cut into three
200 grams cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tablespoons olive oil
sea salt and pepper

500 grams chicken breast
1 tablespoon basil pesto
sea salt and pepper
1 cup (250 ml) Greek yoghurt
1 tablespoon basil pesto
1 teaspoon olive oil
to serve: a small handful of fresh basil leaves

1. Preheat oven to 190 degrees C and line an oven tray with baking paper. Place the carrot, zucchini, red capsicum, eggplant, red onion, asparagus, cherry tomatoes and olive oil onto the prepared tray. Season with sea salt and pepper and toss to combine. Pop into the oven for 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, place the chicken and pesto into a large bowl. Season with sea salt and pepper and toss to combine. Nestle the chicken breasts into the vegetables and bake for another 20 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through. To make the yoghurt sauce, place the yoghurt, pesto and olive oil into a small bowl. Season with sea salt and pepper and gently stir to combine. To serve, pop the yoghurt sauce into the corner of the tray, sprinkle fresh basil leaves over the gorgeously golden chicken and vegetables and enjoy.

Podcast Reviews



The Easy Feed Karina Savage

With over two decades of experience in feeding kids, Karina Savage has uncovered all the tricks to help get your children to eat better and boost their nutrition while saving you precious time in the kitchen.



Parenting & Personalities Kate Mason

One thing about being a parent – there's no shortage of personalities to be surrounded by. Our kids, our partners, our family, our friends. They keep us laughing, growing, loving, and crying. Kate Mason is an author, wife, and mother who has spent her career studying personality and relationships. This podcast will connect you to the ones you love most.



Digital Families Leonie Smith

A 30 min weekly podcast hosted by Leonie Smith Digital Families Counsellor, in conversation with key stake holders about maintaining a healthy and safe environment around digital technology in families.



HEALTH AND SAFETY: How to ease your child's separation anxiety

Separation anxiety varies WIDELY between children. Some babies become hysterical when you are out of sight for a very short time. Other children seem to show ongoing anxiety at separations during infancy, toddlerhood and preschool.

Easing transitions for your child and you

The trick for surviving separation anxiety demands preparation, brisk transitions, and the evolution of time. I would suggest we parents suffer as much as our children do when we leave. Even though we are often reminded that our children stop crying within minutes of our leave-taking, how many of you have felt like you're "doing it all wrong" when your child clings to your legs, sobs for you to stay and mourns the parting? As a parent working outside the home, separation anxiety has created questions for me. Although it is an entirely normal behaviour and a beautiful sign of a meaningful attachment, separation anxiety can be unsettling for us all.

Separation anxiety by age & developmental stage

- **Infants:** Separation anxiety develops after a child gains an understanding of object permanence. Once your infant realizes you're really gone (when you are), it may leave them unsettled. Although some babies display object permanence and separation anxiety as early as 4 to 5 months of age, most develop more robust separation anxiety at around 9 months. The leave-taking can be worse if your infant is hungry, tired or not feeling well. Keep transitions short and routine if it's a tough day.
- **Toddlers:** Many toddlers skip separation anxiety in infancy and start demonstrating challenges at 15 or 18 months of age. Separations are more difficult when children are hungry, tired or sick—which is most of toddlerhood! As children develop independence during toddlerhood, they may become even more aware of separations. Their behaviors at separations will be loud, tearful and difficult to stop.
- **Preschoolers:** By the time children are 3 years of age, most clearly understand the effect their anxiety or pleas at separation have on us. It doesn't mean they aren't stressed, but they certainly are vying for a change. Be consistent; don't return to the room based on a child's plea and certainly don't cancel plans based on separation anxiety. Your ongoing consistency, explanations and diligence to return when you say you will are key.

Surviving separation anxiety: 6 tips to try

leave, keep the goodbye short and sweet. If you linger, the transition time does too. So will the anxiety.

2. Be consistent. Try to do the same drop-off with the same ritual at the same time each day you separate to avoid unexpected factors whenever you can. A routine can diminish the heartache and will allow your child to simultaneously build trust in their independence and in you.

3. Give your full attention When separating, give your child full attention, be loving and provide affection. Then say goodbye quickly despite their antics or cries for you to stay.

4. Keep your promise. You'll build trust and independence as your child becomes confident in her ability to be without you when you stick to your promise of return. The biggest mistake I ever made in this regard was returning to class to "visit" my son about an hour after a terrible transition. I was missing him, and although the return was well intended, I not only extended the separation anxiety, we started all over again in the process. When I left the second time (and subsequent days) it was near nuclear.

5. Be specific, child style. When you discuss your return, provide specifics that your child understands. If you know you'll be back by 3 p.m., tell it to your child on their terms; for example, say, "I'll be back after nap time and before afternoon snack." Define time they can understand. Talk about your return from a business trip in terms of "sleeps." Instead of saying, "I'll be home in 3 days," say, "I'll be home after 3 sleeps."

6. Practice being apart.

Ship the children off to grandma's home, schedule playdates, allow friends and family to provide child care for you (even for an hour) on the weekend. Before starting child care or preschool, practice going to school and your goodbye ritual before you even have to part ways. Give your child a chance to prepare, experience and thrive in your absence!

Remember It's rare that separation anxiety persists on a daily basis after the preschool years. If you're concerned that your child isn't adapting to being without you, chat with the paediatrician. Your paediatrician has certainly helped support families in the same situation. They can help calm your unease and determine a plan to support both of you!



More info via the QR code.

Source: Swanson, Wendy Sue. (6/1/2025). **How to Ease Your Child's Separation Anxiety.** Retrieved <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/Soothing-Your-Childs-Separation-Anxiety.aspx>

UNO NUMERACY AND MORE

1. COLOUR RECOGNITION. Let toddlers **divide Uno cards by colour.** It will enhance their knowledge of basic colours (yellow, red, blue, green). Age 2+.

2. NUMBER RECOGNITION USING UNO CARDS. Picking the same number, colour is irrelevant.

3. SORTING UNO CARDS BY COLOR AND NUMBER.

A little bit more enhanced: Sorting by both colour and number.

4. GO FISH. Shuffle the cards, deal each of the players 5 cards, other cards face down on the table. One player calls out the card he / she has in hand (example: "Do you have red No.1?"). Other players check their hands, if they have it, they collect both cards, and if they don't, they draw another card from the pile. A player who collects most cards is the winner.

Source: besttoys4toddlers.com



FOCUS: The beautiful reason why Danish schools teach empathy to kids

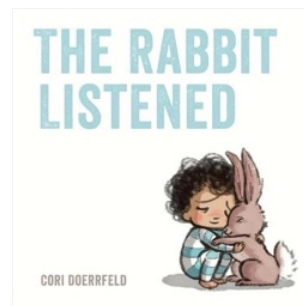
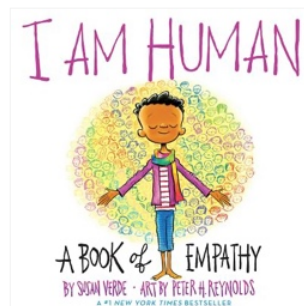
If you're wondering what you can do to make sure your kids grow up happy and well-adjusted, you might want to look to Danish schools. Since 1993, students in Denmark have studied empathy as part of their curriculum. Starting in kindergarten, Danish students learn about emotions, how to articulate their feelings and how to support their classmates. In the book *The Danish Way of Parenting* by Iben Sandahl and Jessica Alexander, the authors assert that the Danes raise empathetic, capable kids who grow into confident, happy adults. It's a winning cycle that starts with how they teach their children empathy.

For the past seven years in a row, Denmark has consistently ranked as one of the happiest nations in the world. Maybe the way they raise their children is the reason why. Danish students participate in the Step by Step program. Students are shown cards that feature kids who are experiencing different emotions, like sadness, anger, and happiness. The students are asked to not just identify the emotion, but to explain what it means to them. They learn how to interpret others' emotions and how they make them feel. Perhaps most tellingly, the students don't judge the emotions. They simply recognize and respect them.

Students also participate in the CAT-kit program, which focuses on identifying and articulating emotions. It was originally designed as a tool for children on the autism spectrum and has since been picked up by educators and parents worldwide. It uses visual pictures to help students learn how to name their thoughts and feelings.

In an essay in *The Atlantic*, Jessica Alexander, one of the co-authors of *The Danish Way of Parenting*, explains that teachers also subtly mix children of different strengths and weaknesses together. "The goal is for the students to see that everyone has positive qualities and to support each other in their efforts reach the next level," she writes. "The math whiz may be terrible at soccer, and vice versa. This system fosters collaboration, teamwork, and respect."

Yet another program that Danish schools utilize comes from The Mary Foundation, established by HRH Crown Princess Mary of Denmark in 2007. The anti-bullying program is taught to elementary-aged children and encourages them to be more caring towards each other. According to The Foundation's [website](#), "Everyone has the right to belong. The Mary Foundation works for



It's not just a one-off lesson or a conversation held on World Kindness Day. Students learn about empathy, kindness and respect from the time that they enter the school system. Danish teachers place equal emphasis on academics as well as emotions. And it's not just about making a grade—it's about raising kind, understanding children. That's something we definitely support.

Source: Motherly. (2020). The beautiful reason why Danish schools teach empathy to kids. Retrieved from <https://www.mother.ly/life/why-danish-schools-teach-empathy/>

If you would like to bring more empathy and kindness teaching into your home books are a great way to do it.

'I AM HUMAN - A book of empathy'

Susan Verde, illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds

'THE RABBIT LISTENED'

Cori Doerrfeld

'Have you filled a bucket today'

Carol McCloud



This is just a quick read of this article. Read the in full via the QR code.

Orsini, Jamie. (October 2020). The beautiful reason why Danish schools teach empathy to kids. Retrieved from <https://www.mother.ly/life/why-danish-schools-teach-empathy/>

RIDE TO DAYCARE, PRE-SCHOOL AND WORK

Improve physical fitness and mental health. We're all aware that riding is a great way to help keep your body fit and healthy, but did you know it can also help to support your mental wellbeing, too? One study reveals that riding is the second best form of exercise for a lower mental health burden, just behind participating in team sports.

Improve productivity. Riding has been shown to improve brain function, with it increasing blood flow to the brain by 28% compared to resting, according to one study. As a result, this can help your children ride to daycare and you arrive to work in a more positive frame of mind, and help to improve productivity throughout the day.

Helps the environment. If you're passionate about sustainability, riding is a great way to play your part and help create a greener local environment. By replacing a car for a bike, not only will you be saving on harmful emissions,



but if more people chose to cycle, it would reduce congestion on roads, helping to cut pollution even further.

It's National Ride '2' School Day on March 21, why not join in this year and start a new tradition with your family or better yet begin a new weekly routine. Follow the QR code for some awesome National Ride2School day ideas!

Source: BQ Bicycle Queensland

PLAYDOUGH

Squishing, rolling, sculpting, modelling . . . young children love to play with playdough. Add some props from around the home and playdough play becomes a powerful way to support your child's learning.

This simple preschool staple lets children use their imaginations and strengthen the small muscles in their fingers—the same muscles they will one day use to hold a pencil and write. Using playdough with you, a friend, or siblings supports your child's social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and enjoying being with other people. Playdough also encourages children's language and literacy, science, and math skills—all at the same time!

Around-the- house Playdough Props

- Birthday candles
- Blocks
- Bottle caps
- Combs
- Cookie cutters
- Feathers
- Leaves, twigs, pebbles
- Rolling pin or bottle
- Straws
- Small toy people and animals

When children use playdough, they explore ideas and try different approaches until they find one that works. They compare and contrast objects, actions and experiences. In their experimenting, children come up with their own ideas, satisfy their curiosity, and analyse and solve problems.

Source: Naeyc. (2023). Playdough Power. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/playdough-power>

You will find the best no-cook playdough recipe at Imagination Tree. Follow the link [here](#).



We Have a New Educator

We are excited to welcome Miss Tiah to our fantastic team of educators at Medowie Gumnut Preschool. If you see her around the preschool, please take a moment to greet her and help her feel at home.



Miss Sharon Away

Miss Sharon will be away from the preschool starting March 27th and will be back on Tuesday, April 22nd. During this time, she will be embarking on an extraordinary journey through Portugal to explore a portion of the renowned Camino trail. While she is away, you can still reach her via email at medowiegumnut@bigpond.com. However, due to the 10-hour time difference and potential internet connectivity issues, prompt responses might not be possible. In her absence, please remember that Miss Mik is the Nominated Supervisor, and on Fridays, Miss Ange also assumes this role. Feel free to contact them if you need assistance during this period.



KICK AND CATCH

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

Head out into your backyard or down to your local oval with a ball or two. Take turns kicking the balls as far as you can and then running to 'catch' them. Try to catch them before they stop rolling. Next try to kick to one another and catch the balls.