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Family Newsletter

Family Education Service

Welcome to our 31st issue of the Family Newsletter. This edition, along with articles on parenting, includes our calendar of programs for parents, grandparents and professionals who work with families.

Top 5 self care tips for new parents

Being a new parent is a wonderful experience for many. However, I've yet to meet a (new) Mum or Dad who isn't exhausted and overwhelmed at times with their new role and responsibility. Finding time to take care of yourself may seem impossible, but the old adage comes to mind, "If you can't take care of yourself, then how can you really care for anyone else?" Here are my top 5 tips for self-care as a new parent:

1. Sleep

It's the first thing that goes out the window, but it's the most important. For many new parents sleeping takes on a whole new meaning in that first year. It's so clichéd to say 'sleep when baby sleeps', but many new parents I speak with say "that's impossible because that's when I finally have time to clean, shower, get dressed, or eat". On days when you are particularly tired allow yourself to 'let go' of as much as possible and sleep where you can.

2. Seek support

Ask someone you trust to mind your baby for a while (even if it's just for an hour one afternoon so you can SLEEP), help with the dishes, or do the washing once in a while. Sharing your emotional experiences will also help to off load. The more honest you are with your own experiences, the more likely others will be too. It's very important not to feel alone and isolated.

3. Exercise and eat well

Getting to a gym is laughable for many new parents, but if you are so inclined, some gyms have crèches for babies. Try going for a walk to the shops or around the block. It doesn't have to be much, just enough to break up your day, get you out of the house and moving. Don't forget to fuel yourself. You need wholesome food to help give you energy and stamina.

4. Alone time

Schedule some time out to be alone. Some ideas may be: have a bath or long shower, book a massage, meditate (even just 5 minutes), listen to music, write a journal entry, get out of the house alone, anything...as long as it is alone. If the only time you can be alone is after baby is sleeping, then try where possible to do something nurturing for yourself in that time.

5. Be kind to yourself

Being a new parent is life-changing and can be difficult. Allow yourself to learn, make mistakes, and grow with your child. Allow yourself to be human – to be great and to be not so great. Don't take to heart your mistakes. Practicing this will help to build your own resilience, which can be very important when raising resilient children.

Source: Lindsay Babcock <http://www.lbpsychology.com.au/top-5-tips-for-new-parents-self-care/>



Self care for all parents and carers

CatholicCare Family Education Services has developed a workshop called *Self Care for Parents and Carers*. This two hour workshop explores what self-care looks like; things that get in the way of practicing self-care; some of the warning signs and symptoms of stress; as well as introducing incorporating mindfulness activities/strategies as a way of looking after ourselves. See insert for more information.

CatholicCare Sandhurst acknowledges the history, culture, diversity, and value of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and pays respect to their elders past and present, as well as acknowledging future generations.

Family meetings

Strengthening the family bond can prove to be challenging even for the most dedicated parents. One of the best tools to achieve this goal is holding a weekly family meeting. This has proven to be one of the most effective and bonding things families can do to create greater harmony and experience more depth and connection with those they love.

Keep it up-beat.

Talking together as a family is something that will make everyone involved feel better. Talk about the good things that happened during the week and ask the kids about the funniest thing that happened at school or around the neighbourhood. Remember to keep your sense of humour. The family meeting is about communication, and it's much easier to communicate when you're having a good time.

The goals of the weekly family meeting are to help you communicate better, bring everyone closer together, and of course to have some fun.

Don't try to control participation.

Let everyone in the family join in, but don't expect children who are three and under to participate fully and do expect a few challenging moments. While encouraging attendance for teenagers, don't make it compulsory. In a very short time they will attend just to see what they may be missing - and make a bit of a fuss when they do attend.

Encourage every person who lives in the home to join the meeting.

If you live with in-laws, or a nanny they are all part of the family and so they need to be part of the meeting. Make sure everyone involved gets some air-time. If one member is not talking use some gentle questioning. You could simply ask, "What was the best thing that happened to you this week?"

Be creative with the meeting space.

Find a place where everyone is comfortable, the kitchen or dining room may be best for this. Don't be afraid to experiment with different locations such as the back yard or even a park.

Give everyone a chance to lead/record the meeting.

This will help your kids feel validated and realize that what they think matters. Make a record of

the decisions reached so you can refer back to agreements made. You can post the minutes of the weekly meeting on the refrigerator so everyone can be reminded of plans for the week. Make sure you follow through, as parenting is best done by example.

Be creative with the agenda.

Being flexible with the Family Meeting is a key component to making it work for everyone. Kids can have a low boredom threshold so if your meeting is too much like school or the parents are preaching the whole time, it won't work.

Examples of some typical family meeting agenda topics:

- What happened last week
- What's happening this week and future/holiday plans.
- Money stuff (There's always money stuff)
- Something wonderful my family did for me
- Something wonderful I did for my family
- Questions/comments about anything that anyone needs or wants to talk about

End each meeting with a fun experience.

This will encourage everyone to attend and participate. Plan your experience as a group and remind the kids that if they don't get to do what they want this time there will be another opportunity next week. You don't have to go somewhere and spend money in order to have fun. Try playing games, cooking or watching something interactive on TV.

Help each other resolve any issues.

Keep talking about things until everyone agrees or at least agrees that it's okay to disagree. Getting support and talking about choices will teach your children

about fairness and about being a family. In areas where there have been difficulties, point them out gently and don't be punitive. This will encourage everyone to ask for help where he or she needs it.

Make the first meeting about planning some family fun.

Holding a weekly family meeting will be one of the highest return investments

you will ever make. So make your plans to hold the best meeting you will ever attend, with the people who you love the most. It's a great way to spend an evening and a greater way to raise a family.



Dads and babies

My son recently became a dad for the first time. Watching him care for his newborn baby reminded me how important it is for dads to develop a strong attachment to their child from birth.

Being an involved father can really make a difference to your baby's mental health and wellbeing. There is no right or wrong amount of time that a dad should spend with their baby; babies benefit from *all* quality interactions where fathers engage and bond with them.

Repeated human contact through touch, cuddling, talking, singing and facial expressions will help your baby's brain development.

Some of the benefits for babies

When a dad is closely involved in his child's care it has a positive impact as they grow. They are:

- better able to handle new, unfamiliar or stressful situations.
- more curious and eager to explore their environment.
- happier and more confident.
- secure and resilient.
- able to manage their emotions better.

Being involved is good for dads too!

Dads who have a strong connection to their children:

- are likely to feel less stressed and be more able to understand themselves, others, and their own feelings.
- have a greater general wellbeing and relationship happiness.
- have a strong sense of how important they are to their children and enjoy close, rich father-child relationships.

Contact our Family Education Service for support and information about being a new dad.

by Narelle Williams

8 Olinda Street Library

The Olinda Street Library is free to the general public. Items can be borrowed for three weeks at a time. Call in, browse the library, borrow a book and enjoy a coffee.

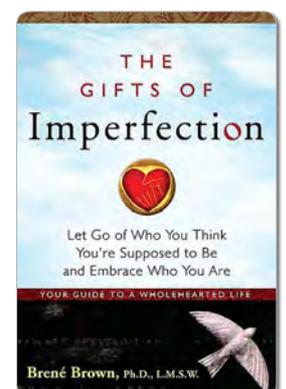
You can find the library on the corner of Olinda and Mitchell Streets in Bendigo, or phone 5441 7881. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm.

The Gifts of Imperfection by Brene Brown

Each day we face a barrage of images and messages from society telling us who, what and how we should be. We are led to believe that if we could only look perfect and lead perfect lives, we'd no longer feel inadequate. So most of us perform, please and perfect, all the while thinking... What if I can't keep all of these balls in the air? What will people think if I fail or give up? In this book, Brene Brown, Ph.D, shares what she's learned from a decade of research on the power of Wholehearted Living – a way of engaging with the world from a place of worthiness.

Did you know...

- Adults have 206 bones. When babies are born, they have 300. Their bones fuse as they grow, resulting in fewer bones as adults.
- The inner ear is the only sense organ to develop fully before birth. It reaches its adult size by the middle of pregnancy.
- A baby has around 30,000 taste buds. They are not just on the tongue but also on the sides, back, and roof of the mouth. Adults have about 10,000.
- The intestines of a newborn are about 11 feet long. The length will double by the time the baby grows to adulthood.
- A newborn urinates about every 20 minutes; at six months it's roughly every hour.
- An average baby will go through approximately 2,700 nappies a year.



Toddler tantrums

Popular parenting advice deals with toddler tantrums in one of two ways: ignore the attention seeking behaviour and reward the toddler when they are good, or discipline the toddler by punishing them through exclusion. The naughty step and time out are commonplace in our culture, but do they really work? Child psychology and neuroscience researchers say otherwise. Here are three reasons why you may want to reconsider your response the next time your toddler has a tantrum.

1. Toddlers can't help it!

Toddlers throw tantrums for one simple reason: their brains are not like adult brains. Our sophisticated brain allows us to control our impulses and calm our emotions before we get out of control. Toddlers physically can't do this. When they tantrum they are not being naughty or manipulative, they're just being toddlers struggling with big feelings, poor communication skills and even poorer emotion regulation skills. To us it may seem ridiculous to tantrum over the colour of a cup or the shape of sandwiches, but just because it's not 'big stuff' to us, it doesn't mean it isn't to the toddler.



2. Toddlers can't calm themselves down alone

Think of a toddler like a pot of water heating on a stove without a lid. Just like the water in the pot, the toddler's big emotions begin to build and bubble away until ultimately, they will boil and spill over. The toddler has no way to turn off the gas, as an adult

can, they only stop when they boil dry, exhausted.

Adults can regulate their own emotional thermostat; they can turn down the gas and put a lid on.

Sitting them by themselves on the naughty step or in time out is akin to letting them 'boil dry'. Toddlers need an adult to turn down the gas and put a lid on for them. They need your help to calm down. They need calm words, hugs and patience.

Toddlers don't think about what they did wrong, or how they can behave better next time; they don't have the brain capacity for such sophisticated thought.

3. Toddlers feel just as bad as we do

Being the parent of a toddler having a tantrum is really tough. It can often feel like the toddler is doing things deliberately to wind you up. They always seem to pick the worst time: when you're tired, ill or out in public. You feel ashamed, embarrassed, angry, helpless or even out of control. The thing is, your toddler feels exactly the same things. They don't enjoy feeling overwhelmed and out of control and they need your help to regain self-control.

The best way to support your toddler to do this when they are having a tantrum is by giving them the space and understanding to express their feelings in ways that help them to calm down, by staying connected and available, rather than withdrawing from them because you don't like their behaviour.

Source: The Gentle Parenting Book by Sarah Ockwell-Smith

Come to our toddler workshop or talk to one of our practitioners to learn more ways to work with the challenging behaviours of your toddler.

Recipe – Sweet chicken fingers

Ingredients

- 1 kg chicken tenderloins
- 3/4 cup of natural yoghurt
- 2 cups of cornflakes, crushed
- 1 cup of grated parmesan cheese

Method

- Preheat oven to 180°C
- Line a baking tray with baking paper
- Combine cornflakes and parmesan in a shallow bowl
- Place yoghurt in a 2nd shallow bowl

Coat the chicken with the yoghurt and then roll in cornflake mixture

Place on tray and bake for 15mins or until chicken is cooked through and the crumbing golden and crunchy



Term 3 – Programs and workshops

For all registrations and enquiries for our Bendigo programs and workshops please contact our centralised intake service or the name specified against the workshop. Phone Ky on 5438 1300 or email fesintake@ccds.org.au. All Bendigo programs are held in CatholicCare Sandhurst's Noel Daly Room at 176-178 McCrae Street Bendigo.

Bendigo

It's All About the Kids (post separation parenting program)

When: Saturday 30th July and Saturday 6th Aug
Time: 10am - 3pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)
Contact: Kate Kerlin on 5438 1300

It's All About the Kids (post separation parenting program)

When: Tuesday 9th Aug – Sept 6th (5 weeks)
Time: 12.30pm - 3pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)
Contact: Kate Kerlin on 5438 1300

Boys Brains

For professionals working with children and families

When: Tuesday 19th July
Time: 9.30am - 12pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)

Tuning in to Teens (6 weeks)

When: Thursday 28th July to 1st Sept
Time: 1pm - 3pm (12.45pm registration)
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)

Tuning in to Kids (6 weeks)

When: Wednesday 3rd Aug to 7th Sept
Time: 1pm - 3pm (12.45pm registration)
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)

Self Care for Parents and Carers

When: Monday 29th August
Time: 6.30pm-8.30pm (6.15pm registration)
Cost: \$10 (\$5 concession)

Knowing Your Teenager

When: Wednesday 7th September
Time: 6.00pm - 8.30pm (5.45pm registration)
Where: Studio 2, Marist College Montague Centre
95 Golf Links Rd, Maiden Gully
Contact: Jan Nelson (Marist) on 0447 217 421
Ky Gregg (CatholicCare) on 5438 1300



Regional

Connecting with Kids (using emotional intelligence)

When: Monday 18th July
Time: 6.30pm - 8.30pm (6.15 registration)
Where: Castlemaine Childcare Co-op
15-17 Templeton St
Contact: Rebecca Buchanan on 5472 3665

Connecting with Kids (using emotional intelligence)

When: Thursday 21st July
Time: 10am - 12.30pm (9.45 registration)
Where: Heathcote Primary School
31 Herriot St
Contact: Megan Haddon on 5433 3090

Knowing Your Teenager

When: Tuesday 2nd August
Time: 6.30pm - 8.30pm (6.15pm registration)
Where: Maldon Neighbourhood Centre
Cnr Church and Edwards St
Contact: Amy Atkinson on 5475 2093

Life Partnership Workshop

When: Sunday 14th August
Time: 9.30am - 1.30pm
Where: St Brendan's Parish Centre
121 Knight St, Shepparton
Cost: \$200 per couple (negotiable)
Contact: Anne-Maree Britt on 5438 1300

Boys Brains

When: Thursday 18th August
Time: 10.30am - 1pm (10.15 registration)
Where: Boort Information Centre
119-121 Godfrey St, Boort
Contact: Loretta Beattie on 5455 2716

Seasons for Growth Companion Training

When: Thursday 8th and Friday 9th September
Time: 10am - 4pm
Where: Family Relationship Centre
68 Wyndham St, Shepparton
Cost: register online at www.goodgrief.org.au
Contact: Narelle Williams on 5438 1300

Boys Brains

When: Wednesday 14th September
Time: 1pm - 3pm (12.45 registration)
Where: Lake Boga Primary School
Williams Rd, Lake Boga
Contact: Jacinta on 5036 9000

Term 3 continued....

Boys Brains

For professionals working with children and families

When: Wednesday 14th September
Time: 3.30pm - 5.30pm (3.15 registration)
Where: Lake Boga Primary School
Williams Rd, Lake Boga
Contact: Jacinta on 5036 9000

Tuning into Kids – 2 day program

When: Monday 15th and 22nd August
Time: 9.30am - 2.30pm (9.15am registration)
Where: St Mary's Primary School
45-49 King Edwards St, Cohuna
Contact: Jenny 5456 2062

Kids and Worry

When: Monday 5th September
Time: 10.30am - 1pm (10.15am registration)
Where: Wycheproof Community Resource
Centre, 280 Broadway Street
Contact: Jenna McNicol on 5493 7455

Term 4 – Programs and workshops

Seasons for Growth – Children's Program

When: Wednesday 12th Oct - 7th Dec
8 weeks - note 26th October public holiday
Time: 4pm - 5pm (3.45 afternoon tea)
Cost: \$25 (\$15 concession)
Contact: Linda Lynch or Jo Rodriguez on 5438 1300

Self Care for Parents and Carers

When: Thursday 13th October
Time: 10am-12pm (9.45am registration)
Cost: \$10 (\$5 concession)

Connecting with Kids

For professionals working with children and families

When: Wednesday 19th October
Time: 9.30am - 12 noon (9.15 registration)
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)

Connecting with Kids (using emotional intelligence)

When: Thursday 15th November
Time: 12pm - 2.30pm (11.45 registration)
Cost: \$10 (\$5 concession)

Boys Brains

When: Thursday 10th November
Time: 10am-12.30pm (9.45am registration)
Cost: \$10 (\$5 concession)

It's All About the Kids (post separation parenting program)

When: Saturday 12th Nov and Saturday 19th Nov
Time: 10am - 3pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)
Contact: Kate Kerlin on 5438 1300

It's All About the Kids (post separation parenting program)

When: Friday 7th October - 4th November
(5 weeks)
Time: 10.30am - 1pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)
Contact: Kate Kerlin on 5438 1300

Seasons for Growth Companion Training

When: Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd December
Time: 10am - 4pm
Cost: Register online at www.goodgrief.org.au
Contact: Narelle Williams on 5438 1300

Stepfamilies

When: Saturday 3rd December
Time: 9.30am - 1.30pm
Cost: \$20 (\$10 concession) per person
Contact: Ky Gregg on 5438 1300

Regional

Toddlers

When: Monday 7th November
Time: 12.30pm-2.30pm (12.15pm registration)
Where: Maldon Neighbourhood Centre
Cnr Church and Edwards Streets
Childcare available
Contact: Amy Atkinson on 5475 2093

Term 1 2017

Recovering from Separation

When: Wed 8th February – 29th March (8 weeks)
Time: 7pm - 9pm
Cost: \$40 (\$20 concession)
Contact: Ky Gregg on 5438 1300

Phone Ky Gregg on 5438 1300 if you want to know more about any of our programs or workshops

*Register early! Groups are subject to maximum and minimum numbers.
Unfortunately child care facilities are not available unless specified.*