



Keep smiling, because life is a beautiful thing
and there's so much to smile about. — Marilyn
Monroe

Star Kids LDC
& Preschool



ON *this* MONTH

National Flag Day
Early Childhood Educator's Day
R U OK? Day
Community Engagement

SEPTEMBER
2024

Early Childhood Educator's Day



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' DAY – SEPTEMBER 4
Early Childhood Educators' Day recognises & celebrates the work of Australia's educators in early learning services (long day care, family day care, kindergarten/preschools and occasional care) for their wonderful contribution to the wellbeing and healthy development of the young children in their care.

R U OK? DAY



R U OK? Day – SEPTEMBER 12

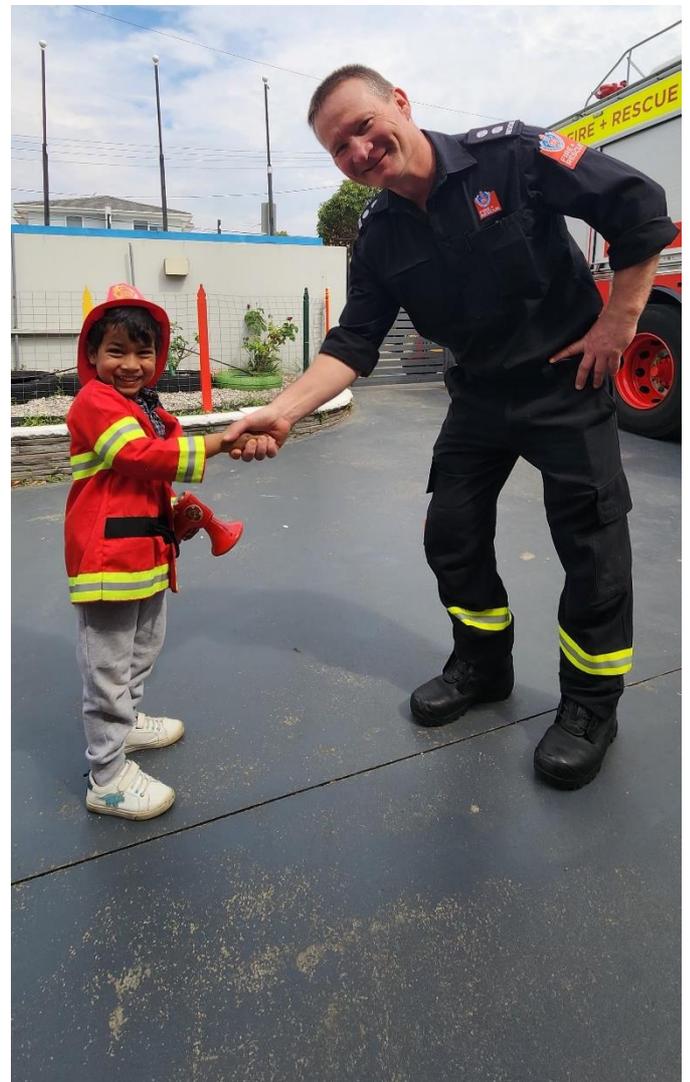
Life's ups and downs happen to all of us. People can experience things like relationship breakdowns, financial difficulties, health issues or periods of major change at work, home or in life. The people in your world won't always tell you if something's troubling them, so it's important that you make asking, 'are you OK?' a part of your everyday relationships with friends, family, teammates and colleagues.

Community Engagement





At Star Kids LDC & Preschool, we had an exciting visit from the Fire + Rescue NSW team as part of their community engagement initiative. Our children actively participated in an informative learning session, asked questions during a Q&A, and got an up-close look at a real fire truck! The visit provided a wonderful opportunity for the kids to learn about fire safety and the important role of firefighters in keeping our communities safe. It was an unforgettable experience that sparked curiosity and joy among our young learners!



HEALTH AND SAFETY: Good mental health for children: 3-8 years

Children's mental health: what it is and why it matters

Mental health is **the way children think and feel about themselves and the world around them**. It affects how children cope with life's challenges and stresses.

What good mental health in children looks like

Children with good mental health **feel loved, safe and secure** in their environments. They also feel happy and positive about themselves most of the time. They're kind to themselves during tough times or when things don't go the way they expect. This means they feel OK about trying new or challenging things. They enjoy life, learn well and get along well with family and friends. And they can manage sad, worrying or angry feelings and bounce back from tough times.

Relationships and good mental health for children

A positive relationship with you directly and positively affects your child's mental health. Here are ideas to promote your child's mental health and wellbeing through a loving and supportive relationship:

- Tell your child that you love them, no matter what. You can also show love through your body language and nonverbal communication – for example, making eye contact, giving a hug or smiling at your child.
- Use a positive, constructive and consistent approach to guide your child's behaviour. This means giving your child praise and attention when they behave well, rather than negative consequences when they behave in challenging ways.
- Make time each day to talk and listen to your child. If your child wants to talk, try to stop what you're doing and give them your full attention.
- Enjoy time with your child doing activities they like. This could be reading together, kicking a ball, drawing, playing board games and so on.
- Have regular family meals. Eating together can strengthen your relationship with your child, give your child a sense of stability and connectedness, and have a positive effect on their development. It might also encourage your child to eat well too.
- Work on positive ways to solve problems and manage conflict between you and your partner, with your child and among other family members.
- Encourage your child to connect with others in the community – for example, waving and chatting to neighbours, attending local festivals or helping out at a community garden. This gives your child a stronger sense of their place in the world and helps them learn how to relate to different people.

Emotions and good mental health for children

Children experience all sorts of emotions as part of growing up – fear, disappointment, sadness, anxiety, anger, joy, hope and so on. When children cope with big emotions or calm themselves down in difficult or emotional situations, they're likely to feel good about themselves. Here are ways you can help your child learn to manage emotions:

- **Talk about emotions with your child** and encourage them to recognise and label their emotions. You can also let your child know that it's natural to have all sorts of feelings. For example, 'It looks like you're really frustrated that your toy won't work. I can understand that'.
- **Role-model a positive outlook for your child** – for example, 'Running all the way around the oval looks hard, but I think I can do it if I take it slow and steady', or 'I'm disappointed that my cake didn't cook properly, but that's OK – I'll try it again another time'.
- **Support your child when something is bothering them**. For example, if your child is having trouble with friends at school, you could give your child plenty of hugs and reassure them that you're there for them. And you could work with the teacher on a plan to handle the situation.
- **Help your child learn to manage small worries** so they don't become big problems. You can do this by gently encouraging your child to do things they're anxious about instead of avoiding scary situations. For example, 'Have you thought about trying out for the school choir this year? You really enjoy singing'.

Behaviour, goals, skills and good mental health for children

Here are ways to promote your child's mental health and wellbeing through a focus on behaviour:

- Have family rules about behaviour and involve your child in developing rules and consequences. Adjust the rules and consequences as your child grows. For example, you and your child might make and adjust rules about digital technology use or online behaviour. Rules and boundaries help children of all ages feel safe and secure.
- **Help your child to set realistic goals** for their age and abilities and work towards achieving them – for example, riding a bike without training wheels or trying to solve a difficult maths problem for school. And praise your child's efforts to achieve the goal, rather than the goal itself.
- **Help your child learn how to solve problems** so that they develop the skills to do this for themselves when they're older. For example, you can help your child work out what the problem is, brainstorm possible solutions, and choose a solution to put into action.
- **Encourage your child to try new things**, take age-appropriate risks, and learn from their mistakes. This could be things like entering a competition, speaking in front of the class, climbing new equipment at the playground and so on.

If you're concerned that your child is showing signs of poor mental health, it's best to seek professional help as soon as possible. Your GP can guide you to the most appropriate services for your family.



Read the article via the QR code.

Source: Raisingchildren.net.au. (2022, November).
Good mental health for children: 3-8 years.
Retrieved from raisingchildren.net.au

FOCUS ARTICLE: Why Is It Important to Read to Your Child?

Parents hear all the time that it's important to read to kids. But why exactly is that? **The benefits of reading together go far beyond learning to read.**

Reading to young children is an important way to help them build language skills. It exposes them to new words and ways of using language. It also helps them learn general information about the world, which makes it easier for them to learn about new subjects once they get to school.

Books also help children build empathy and learn how to handle challenging feelings. Parents can use reading time as a chance to talk about emotions and how to cope with them. For example, you might say: "Have you ever felt as angry as the girl in this book? What would you do if you did?"

Even a few minutes of reading together gives you and your child a chance to slow down and connect with each other. And the sensory experience of sitting with you and hearing your voice also engages their brain in a way that makes learning easier.

There's no one right way to read to your child. You can read to them in any language, or multiple languages. You can do it at the same time every day or change up the routine. Your

child doesn't even need to be sitting with you — just sitting nearby with a book while they play can be a way to connect.

The important thing is for your child to hear words and language and to have books be part of their daily life. Any steps you're able to take can make a big difference.



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

Hannah Sheldon-Dean (May 13, 2024). Why Is It Important to Read to Your Child Retrieved from <https://childmind.org/article/why-is-it-important-to-read-to-your-child/>

READING AND BOOK-BASED ACTIVITIES

- Try books with rhyme, rhythm and repetition. Many young children enjoy books like *Ten little fingers and ten little toes* by Mem Fox, *Hairy Maclary* by Linley Dodd and *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson.
- Encourage your child to turn the pages and talk about what they see. Use your finger to guide your child's eyes from left to right across the page as you read and point out certain words or phrases.
- Try lift-the-flap books or touch-and-feel books. You could even make your own book with objects your child likes to look at and touch.
- Encourage your child to take the lead with reading – for example, 'Where do we start from?' Every so often, stop reading and ask your child what they think will happen next.
- Link books with real life. For example, if you've read a book about playing in a park, you might like to take your child to the local park and point out swings that look like the ones in the book.
- Encourage your child to act out the story that you're reading. For example, you can ask your child to hop like the kangaroo in the book.
- Follow your child's lead with reading. Encourage your child but try not to push them. Experiment with different books to see what your child likes, and just have fun!

Source: raisingchildren.net.au



MINDFUL ENERGY USE

Encourage your family to be more mindful of energy use throughout the day. This goes beyond simply using energy-efficient appliances; it involves conscious choices about when and how energy is used.

Turn off lights and unplug devices when leaving a room, and make use of natural daylight whenever possible. During colder months, open curtains to let sunlight warm your home naturally, and in warmer months, use natural ventilation to cool down your living spaces. Teach your family to appreciate the beauty of a candlelit dinner or a game night without electronic devices, reducing energy consumption and creating a more intimate atmosphere.

Source: nanani.world



STEM

STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math. Skills developed by students through STEM provide them with the foundation to succeed at school and beyond. young children learn through active exploration—and the drive to observe, interact, discover, and explore is inherent in their development.

During the earliest years, infants and toddlers develop 700 neural connections every second,” Buchter said. “These biologically driven neurological processes and natural curiosity of how the world works make early childhood an optimal time to introduce children to scientific inquiry.”

What does STEM look like in Early Learning Settings?

- Cooking activities
- Nature walks
- Challenging building activities
- Grocery store exploring
- Water play

National Quality Framework | Quality Area 1:
Educational Program and Practice

1.1 The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.

1.2 Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.

University of Nevada. (2020, January 15). The Issues: Why STEM Education Must Begin in Early Childhood Education
Retrieved from <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/issues-why-stem-education-must-begin-early-childhood-education>

Grocery store exploring



Star Kids LDC & Preschool proudly celebrated National Flag Day! Our little learners dressed in the colors of the national flag and took part in various activities to honor the day. They enjoyed arts and crafts, where they made their own mini flags, and learned about the importance and symbolism of the national flag. The celebration instilled a sense of pride and unity in the children as they waved their flags high and participated in a special group activity, singing together with joy and enthusiasm. It was a meaningful and memorable day for all!



5 Minute MOVES

Freeze

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

In this version of tag, as you catch and tag someone, they must freeze until someone else touches them and they are unfrozen. This is best played with the whole family.

Chasing games teach children to move their bodies in space effectively (not bumping into people and objects as they move) and improve their speed and reaction time.

Source: empoweredparents.co