You are so much sunshine in every square inch – WALT WHITMAN

Star Kids Long Day Care & Preschool

DECEMBER 2025

ON this MONTH

AT
STAR KIDS LONG DAY CARE & PRESCHOOL

December Fire Drill: Practicing Safety Together
Dharug Animal Workshop
Star Kids Sustainable Stories
Celebrating the New Year through Collaborative Art
Exploring Dharug Country through a Map

Community Events

IDPWD – December 3

Every day, people of all abilities bring energy, ideas, and heart to our families, schools, and communities. On December 3, the **International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD)**, we reflect on the 2025 theme: **"Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress."** This reminds us that inclusion is not a luxury but a foundation for everyone's growth and wellbeing. From playgrounds to homes, workplaces, and community spaces, when people with disability are welcomed, listened to, and valued, our society becomes stronger, more connected, and richer.

Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal – December

For 38 years, the **Wishing Tree Appeal** has brought joy and practical gifts to children and families in need. This Christmas, you can help by donating a wish-listed item at your local Kmart store, spreading happiness and supporting our community's spirit of care and generosity.

In December, we conducted a **fire drill** involving educators, children, and some parents who were invited to join. The drill provided a valuable opportunity for everyone to **practice evacuation procedures, understand safety routines, and respond calmly in an emergency**. Children were guided step-by-step by educators; reinforcing safety awareness and helping them feel confident in following instructions. Parents also observed and participated, strengthening their understanding of our safety practices. Overall, the fire drill was a successful and educational experience, supporting our ongoing commitment to maintaining a **safe and prepared learning environment** for the entire preschool community.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:SnackTime Savvy for Pre-schoolers

As the holiday break sets in and regular routines fall away, many families find themselves spending far more time in the kitchen trying to keep up with "snacky" children. Without school or preschool structure, little ones often ask for food simply because the day feels different and being asked for a snack six times before 9:30 am can test even the calmest household.

Here are some simple tips and tricks to help keep everyone satisfied, steady and far from "hangry" this holiday season!

Why the snack kitchen seems busier:
When children are out of their usual daycare or preschool routine, their sense of hunger can easily get tangled with thirst or perceived boredom. Without the structure they're used to, they may wander to the kitchen more often even if they're not truly hungry. Having healthy, ready-to-go snacks on hand can help reduce the constant "What can I have?" and ease the pressure on parents during the holiday break.

Smart snack strategies for younger children:

- Make water bottles assessable: Choose an easy to access spot in your home and make this a water bottle station just like your child has at preschool. Encourage them to return their bottle they have finished.
- Pre-portion favourite items: For example, small tubs of yoghurt, little pots of cottage cheese, or sliced fruit and vegetables already washed and ready. This makes choice quick and reduces the time you spend chopping while little ones wait impatiently.
- Keep it colourful and fun: Offer a mix of carrot sticks, cucumber slices, red capsicum strips and cherry tomatoes. The "rainbow" concept helps children feel excited about snack time.
- Balance indulgence with nourishment: It's fine to include a small treat, but pair it with something wholesome e.g., a small biscuit with a tub of yoghurt or a natural-fruit muffin with fresh fruit.
- Exploring new foods: Introduce variety but avoid pressure. Encouraging curiosity, "Would you like to smell it?" or "What colour is it?", is more effective than insisting children eat
- Use the downtime wisely: While the kitchen is busy, invite your child to help place snack containers in the fridge or help you wash the fruit. This keeps them engaged, builds confidence and turns snack prep into a shared-time activity.
- Designate snack-zones: Create a low shelf in the fridge or pantry labelled "for snack time" so children can occasionally choose their own pre-prepared snack (under supervision). This promotes autonomy and cuts down on constant kitchen visits.
- Cook together: The QR code below includes 3 great batching recipes that your child can help cook with you while adding to the family snacks. Or cook this month's*Kids in the kitchen* recipe and enjoy some Christmas brownies together.

By planning ahead and making snack preparation simple and fun, you'll spend less time scrambling when hunger strikes and more time enjoying those long, warm holiday days with your little one in tow.

Find recipes and more information on this article via the QR code.

Source: goodforkids.nsw.gov.au (2025). **Everyday Snacks** Retrieved *from* Good For Kids

KICK THE CUP

You will need: Plastic cups, marker or letter stickers

This pre-K activity combines letters with sports. Write a single letter on a few plastic cups. (You could use white board markers, so it is easy to change letters.) Spread the cups with letters on them out a bit. Give your child a small soccer ball (or any soft ball), instruct them to kick the ball toward the letter cups. Once they knock a cup down, ask them to say the name of the letter on the cup. For a more advanced version, say a letter first, and see if they can aim for the corresponding cup. Have Fun. For more preschool literacy activities head to '**Fun learning for kids'.**

FOCUS ARTICLE:Making the Most of the Holidays Together

As the end of the year draws near, we're reminded of how precious those long, warm summer days are, especially when shared with our little ones. Life slows down, routines pause, and families come together for the all-too-brief holiday break. While the festive period often carries a bustle of celebrations and to-do lists, it's also a rare window in our children's lives full of innocence, wonder and unhurried time.This season offers a chance to shift our focus and intentionally savour the moments. Here's how we can do just that:

1. Embrace the slower pace

With schools and centres closed, the rhythm of the day changes. Instead of rushing from activity to activity, allow for pockets of unstructured time where children can wander, imagine and simply be. A lazy afternoon in the backyard, watching the sunlight drift, or a spontaneous nature walk down the street can create rich memories.

2. Make every day feel festive

The décor, songs and smells of the season are exciting for children, but it doesn't need to be over-the-top. Involve kids in simple traditions: turning on the fairy lights at dusk, decorating craft stockings, or making a "holiday tree" from found branches and nature's treasures. These small rituals become the stories your children will remember.

3. Create together-time, not just events

It's tempting to pack holidays full of outings, visits and celebrations. While those are special, the most meaningful moments often happen in the ordinary. Set aside time for baking together, board-games in the afternoon sun, or building a fort in the lounge. These slower moments deepen connection not because they're perfect, but because they're shared.

4. Let children lead the wonder

When children are still young, their sense of awe is at itsthem, height. Encourage their questions,explore what fascinates and allow plenty of room for slow moments. Time to find a shiny leaf, a curious bug, watch the way the sunset glows through the window. Their wonder is contagious and reminds us to slow down too.

5. Balance togetherness and rest

While it's wonderful to be "all home" and present, holiday togetherness doesn't mean constant high energy. For younger children especially, innovation, noise and novelty can sometimes overwhelm. Build in intervals of calm: a quiet book under a tree branch, a nap or simply lying on the grass and watching clouds drift. Those pauses help keep everyone's spirits high.

A Few Tips to Remember

- Fewer rushed outings, more time to breathe.
- Keep bedtime rituals familiar, consistency grounds children even when routines change
- Let go of perfection: messy crafts, snack disasters and spontaneous outings can become the funniest stories.
- Make one thing "just for fun" each day: a backyard ball game, a shared drawing, an unplanned ice-cream.
- Capture the little moments: a quick photo of giggles over spilled paint, a leaf found on the walk, these become the real keepsakes.

As you gather for this festive season, remember: the holidays feel long to us, but in the yearschildren are small and full of wonder, they pass far too quickly. The everyday magic, the lazy mornings, the shared crafts, the backyard adventuresmake up the heart of childhood memories.

From all of us to your family, here's to quiet joy, unexpected laughter and a holiday season woven with presence, playful connection and love.

Sustainability CORNER

A "New-to-You" Way to Celebrate

This Christmas, consider embracing the joy of *toy swapping*, a simple, sustainable way to refresh your child's playtime without the constant cycle of buying new. Children are naturally drawn to toys that feel different, exciting or "new-to-them," which makes swapping with friends, cousins or neighbours a fun and meaningful alternative.

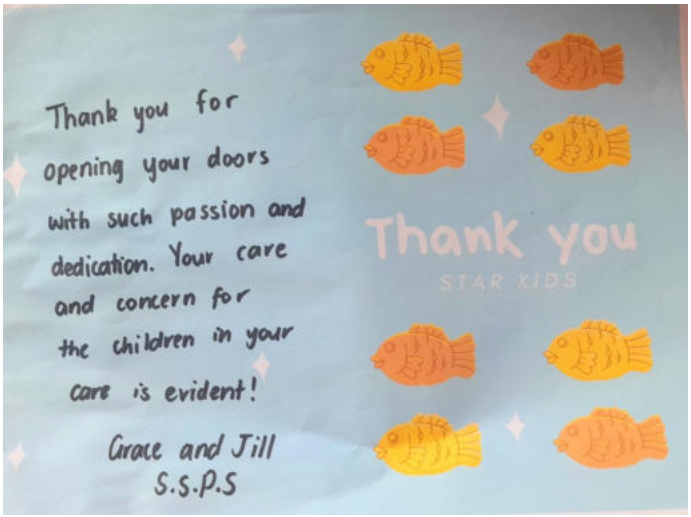
A toy swap encourages children to explore new interests, practise sharing, and appreciate the value of re-using rather than replacing. Gently used books, puzzles, figurines, blocks, and dress-ups can feel brand new in the hands of another child. It's also a great way to clear out items your family no longer needs while giving them a second life.

By choosing "new-to-you" toys this Christmas, families can reduce waste, save money, and model thoughtful, environmentally friendly habits. It's a small change that brings big joy—and reminds children that the magic of Christmas doesn't have to come wrapped in plastic.

Dharug Animal Workshop

Our children participated in a **Dharug Animal Workshop** delivered by **Wingaru Education**. The Aboriginal educator shared rich cultural knowledge and brought hands-on resources such as **possum skin, emu egg shells, and other artefacts** for the children to explore. She shared stories, read a storybook with the children, and engaged them in an outdoor game. This meaningful experience supported children's understanding of Aboriginal culture, storytelling, and connection to the land in an engaging and respectful way.

We were delighted to welcome **three of our former preschoolers**, now attending **Al Hikma Private Muslim School**, back to our centre. They visited with their teachers to proudly share and show their achievements. It was a special and joyful moment for our children and educators, reminding us those Star Kids **children will always be Star Kids children.**



We recently welcomed the **school counsellor and a kindergarten teacher from Strathfield South Public School** to our preschool. Their visit focused on observing children who will be attending kindergarten at their school. During the visit, we gave them a tour of our preschool, shared our **project-based learning approach**, and introduced our **Aboriginal learning corner**. They later joined the children in play, engaging in meaningful interactions and communication. The visitors shared **positive feedback** about our centre, and it was a lovely and valuable experience for both the children and educators.

Star Kids Sustainable Stories

Based on the children's interests, they used **recycled cardboard** to create a pretend **TV** for dramatic play. Children took turns role-playing different TV shows, including **dancing performances, news reporting, interviews, an Arabic lesson show, and a healthy eating discussion**. They confidently expressed their ideas, used language creatively, and worked together to take on different roles. Educators joined the play to support conversations, extend learning, and build positive relationships. This experience encouraged imagination, communication skills, cultural expression, and collaboration in a fun and meaningful way.

Celebrating the New Year through Collaborative Art

Based on the children's interests and ideas, the preschoolers engaged in a **collaborative art experience** using a large piece of **recycled cardboard**. Children explored a variety of materials and resources to paint freely, mix colours, and express themselves through **creative and abstract art**. They confidently shared ideas, experimented with textures and colours, and worked alongside their peers, supporting one another throughout the process. Educators joined in the experience, modelling creativity, encouraging conversations, and building strong, positive relationships with the children. This collaborative art experience provided meaningful opportunities for self-expression, teamwork, and connection, strengthening children's sense of belonging and enjoyment in shared creative learning.

Exploring Dharug Country through a Map

Preschoolers explored **Dharug Country** by creating a map using **recycled cardboard**, supporting our sustainability practices. They were encouraged to identify Dharug land and mark it using stickers. Through this experience, children also learned about how the Dharug people lived, cared for the land and nature, and discussed our responsibility to respect and look after the land we share today.

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