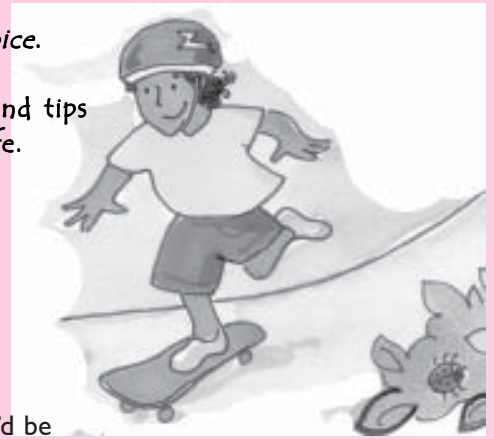


Receive the Parent Voice
by email. Contact
yhiggins@darebin.vic.gov.au
to register.

Safe & sound

Welcome to the Spring issue of the *Parent Voice*.
In this issue we are focusing on *Safety*.
We hope you find the following stories, articles and tips
useful in keeping your family healthy and safe.



Risky business!

My 5 year old son was at the top of a 2 metre half-pipe at the skate park on his scooter, about to 'drop in'.

He was the only five year old at the skate park or at least the only five year old at the top of a ramp and not sitting on the bench watching. He had his helmet on but it was a long way down to the bottom of the ramp.

This is the same silly monkey who at 4 would love to ride his bike (no training wheels thank you!) down steep hills with his feet off the pedals and on the handlebars, so we've been used to some hairy moments, but even so. Should I call him back down? Or let him get on with it?

Let's face it – some kids are more risk taking than others, and this seems to be the case no matter how much we parents encourage more restrained behaviours. And kids who are climbing that fence, or tree, or jumping off that wall, are often doing so because they can; they have the physical strength, co-ordination and balance and therefore the confidence to do it, so they do. And no matter how many times you tell the 2 year old that the kettle is hot they still reach out to see for themselves.

One child will look at a 6 foot drop and say "woah,

too far down, not jumping off there, might hurt myself!" while the next will think "wow! awesome! that'd be great to jump off!". And while one child's response to you pointing out that they might break their leg if they fall from 6 foot might be "hmm, oh yeah, ouch", the next might just say "what if I don't break my leg?"

Some risk-taking seems to be 'hard-wired', but what we can do from an early age is to encourage resilience in our kids when things go wrong in their worlds (they fall over, a favourite toy breaks). This seems to get a bit easier as you become a more experienced parent, and realise that most kids can bounce back from most falls and upsets without too much bother.

We can help build this resilience by comforting and reassuring, but not overdoing it. This is sometimes easier said than done and you can usually spot a 'rescue' parent: they're the ones rushing across the playground to scoop up their child anytime their hands touch the tanbark.

You can't help but notice at skate parks (I've been spending far too much time at them lately!) that once the kids get to about 12 years or so, and can get to the skate park themselves, the

Continued on page 2...

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- Poisoning prevention
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- Safety books
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**The Parent Voice Summer issue will be produced in Nov/Dec 2009.
The topic is 'How Much is Too Much? – low cost & healthy celebration ideas'.
Your contributions are welcome! (See p.12).**

Continued from page 1...

vast majority of them stop wearing head protection, on the basis it seems that helmets are just not cool.

At the same time the stunts they do get more and more (to my mind) crazy, and are likely to risk serious injury if they go wrong. The other day I watched a kid of about 15 doing 360 degree loops up a ramp on his pushbike without a helmet. I had to look away! Don't know if a helmet would have stopped him breaking his neck if he fell off but it might give him a bit of protection.

So I guess what we can also try and instill in our kids is if you're going to take risks make them calculated ones, take a little thought about how things might turn out, and then weigh up the odds.

We can try and make our kids as aware as possible about what might happen 'if', and hope that when they're old enough to be doing things without us around they'll have absorbed enough to keep them from truly reckless stuff. Yes, you can go down that hill on your scooter... but no, you can't swing from that branch, look how thin it is!

By the way my son ended up successfully 'dropping in', albeit with me nervously waiting at the bottom of the ramp poised in rescue parent position and ready to whisk him off to the nearest Emergency Department. Then he did it again, and again, and I realised that this was as easy for him as getting anxious about it was for me, and so I relaxed.

Now, if only I can just convince him that getting dressed for school is a really thrilling and risky behaviour, he'll never be late again...

Dan Barron



How do you balance your fears as a parent?

There's much to be considered when it comes to raising our children today. We are bombarded with stories of unsafe toys and parks, violence in schools, cyber-bullying, drugs, alcohol, obesity, and the list goes on. When faced with this, who wouldn't worry?

However, many of these worries are overblown and unfounded. In fact, skinned knees and school yard spats can carry hidden rewards. The research from early childhood educators, psychologists and pediatric health specialists confirms the importance of unstructured activity and the need for parents to back off. Overprotective parenting can lead to the illusion of control, unnecessary intrusion by parents, failure to instill self-confidence, and, when kids are older, greater risk-taking behaviour.

Children raised in overprotective homes are not prepared for life in the world as adults. Without the safety-net and protection of their parents, they haven't learned from experience and making mistakes. When they become teens, some kids become complacent, anxious or depressed. Others take dangerous risks.

Michael Ungar (a social worker, family therapist and associate professor in the Social Work at Dalhousie University, Canada) argues that kids need a healthy dose of risk. He defines risk as the potential that something bad might happen. Why?

- When kids are exposed to appropriate risks and challenges, they learn about limits and common sense.
- When kids are involved in activities that require responsibility, they learn maturity, job skills and how to give to others.
- However, too much risk endangers a child.
- Too little risk means fewer opportunities for kids to grow up healthy.
- The 'risk-taker's advantage' shows positive effects by the time kids become adolescents. They feel that they belong, are trustworthy, responsible and capable.

Consider your Own Fears - if you feel you may be overprotective, ask yourself what kinds of risk, responsibility and adventure-seeking behaviours you sought when you were a child.

Get to Know Your Child's Community

Structure and Freedom - trust your children to follow your safety rules and give them freedom according to their age, ability, circumstance and situation. If your child is trying something new, gently guide him or her and gradually fade into the background. Check in occasionally, and learn to supervise from a distance.

Physical Safety - make sure your home is truly safe and that you have established age-appropriate safety rules in your family.

Strive for a balance between chance-taking and undue risks. Go to www.tvo.org/tvoparents/protectivequiz.html and complete the quiz to see if you are an 'overprotective' parent. This website also has some useful tips on how to break free of overprotective tendencies.

Information source: Too Safe For Their Own Good.
By Michael Ungar. McClelland & Stewart Ltd. 2007.

Playgroup safety checklist



Safety at playgroup can often be overlooked because playgroup is only two hours of our busy week. It is not until an accident happens that we realise its importance.

While each parent or caregiver is responsible for the safety and welfare of the children they bring to playgroup, we have a collective responsibility to ensure that the playgroup environment is as safe as possible.

This handy checklist that may help your playgroup identify where improvements can be made.

1 Is the size of your venue adequate?

Look at your venue and determine how many families will comfortably fit. Take into account how many children families have and where prams or pushers will be placed during playgroup.

As more families join your playgroup, overcrowding can occur causing more likelihood of accidents happening. If your playgroup is overcrowded, consider beginning a second session.

2 Do you have access to a telephone or a mobile phone at playgroup?

If there is no landline available, ask two families to bring their mobile phone along each week. By having two families responsible for this, even if one family is away from playgroup, the playgroup will still have phone access and be able to call emergency services in time of need.

3 Are emergency numbers displayed at your venue?

Display emergency numbers and ensure everyone knows where they are. When an emergency occurs you don't want to be looking for them. Make note of information required by the emergency services. This may include exact address of playgroup venue and names of streets at the closest intersection.

4 Do you have a first aid kit at playgroup?

Every adult at playgroup should know where the first aid kit is kept. One person should have the responsibility of ensuring that kit contents are not out of date. The first aid kit should be out of children's reach.

Consider first aid training for your playgroup families. (First Aid for Parents sessions are available during the year at Darebin Children's Services in Thornbury. Phone 8470 8110 for further details.)

5 Are toys & equipment regularly maintained?

Toys and equipment need regular checking especially if several playgroups run from one venue. Repair or

remove any broken toys or equipment. Establish a regular cleaning roster for toys and equipment to ensure they are as clean as possible. This applies especially to the toys used by infants – we all know that everything is placed in their mouths as they explore objects.

6 Are hot cups of tea & coffee prepared & consumed away from the children?

Place a barrier at the kitchen door to prevent children from entering. Ensure all kettle cords are out of children's reach and the kettle is in the safest position on the bench. Consider where adults drink their hot drinks – are they required to be seated when drinking their hot drinks, are safety cups with lids available for use?

7 Are poisonous substances & cleaning agents kept in overhead or locked cupboards?

Even if you have a barrier to the kitchen, cupboard locks are still recommended. If you use a community centre ensure cupboards used by other groups are also secured.

8 Are handbags & nappy bags kept out of reach?

Have a look what is in your handbags or nappy bag. You may find tablets, lozenges, lollies, mints, loose coins, paper clips, safety or hair pins, jewellery or balm. Any small article that fits into a camera's film canister is a choking hazard for a child.

Lollies and tablets can be attractive in their bright colours and varying shapes. With children's limited life experience they cannot be expected to differentiate which is dangerous and which is not. Store handbags and nappy bags out of children's reach.

Happy and safe playgrouping!!

Thanks to Playgroup Victoria & Susan Stanecki, Darebin Playgroup Liaison & Resource Officer (ph: 8470 8115) for this information.

Further reading:
ACTIVE KIDS
VICHEALTH REPORT

How times have changed
Active transport
literature review
Dr Lisa Thomson
March 2009

Parent voices...

Local parents discuss
aspects of safety

Talk the talk & walk the walk

It's a 2 km walk to school for us, on a straight road, can't go wrong, can't get lost. Alternatively you could catch the bus from outside the house right to the school door; or ride your bike, keep to the pavement, straight down the road... we've been doing it for years. Walking in the warmer weather or driving if it's too cold or there are extra things to carry to school

Earlier this year a re-jig in our childcare arrangements for my four year old, meant getting my 10 year old (Charlotte) to school via a kinder in Ivanhoe, too crazy! So the ten year old said "hey I can walk to school then, or I will ride, or even catch the bus if it is raining..."

My heart took a quick journey through Anxiety Avenue and back via Cape Independence. A two km walk straight down the road, can't get lost. But the traffic, three major roads to cross and flanked the whole journey by Murray Road. That's big!

I wanted to shadow her all the way there, just in case... I wondered is she too young, what if, what if, what if... should I ring the school just in case she didn't get there?

But Charlotte loves it, you can almost see her grow as she strides out in the mornings (even preferring to go on her own on days when I could drive or walk with her). She knows when the bus comes, gets the ticket money from the loose change jar, and gets off at the right stop.

Last year in grade four this was not an option. There was an occasion when I was in a bit of a jam to take Charlotte to school and I suggested to her that she get the bus, but I could see the hesitation so didn't push it.

On the days I am home to greet her, my heart really does swell with pride that she wants to walk, on her own too, not even in a group. But it's not just the walking, it's about trust, independence and also about navigating, owning and understanding her Neighbourhood.

Sometimes I watch for her as she comes up home over the hill... an independent child, walking home, with her own sense of time and space.

Not doing the 'school run' is liberating for parents and children alike. I feel like I am offering her our Neighbourhood, trusting her, preparing her for high school, and I love listening to stories of what happened on the way to and from school.

Justine

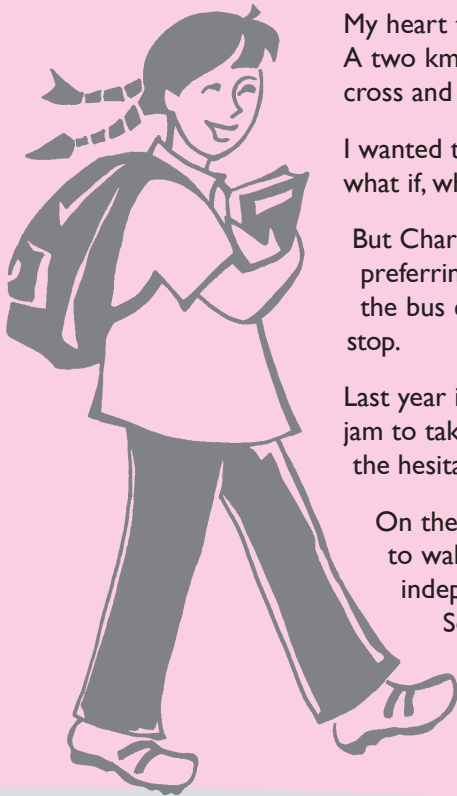
Kids & cats

We adopted an older cat that had been at Lort Smith for at least 3 months. We hoped she'd have more road sense than our last cat (and she does!), but didn't expect her to be unsociable. The kids love running around the house and being noisy, but the cat doesn't and stands her ground. We've had to instill in our kids the importance of paying attention to the cat and her body language. Warning signs to stay away from the cat are when her ears are back, her back is arched, her tail is flicking and/or she is hissing.

We generally tell the kids to look out for her and move and speak quietly around her. We always encourage them to speak to her quietly if they need to pass by close to her, and it works.

There's a great child-friendly website on dealing with cats at www.pets.info.vic.gov.au/01/dc.htm.

Kathy (2 sons, 5 & 8yrs)



Road safety starts early

I began teaching my children road safety when they were in the pram.

I used to talk about stopping at the curb and looking and listening for cars before crossing the road. We also kept to the left when walking on bike paths which they now have to do when riding their bikes.



Elizabeth, mum to a 5yr old and 7yr old

When a new baby arrives – preparing your pet dog

A new baby inevitably brings changes to a household. It can be quite a demanding time, with around-the-clock care taking priority over most other things – including your pet dog's routine.

Amidst all the excitement, your dog may suddenly find itself receiving less time and attention than usual. Its place in the 'pack' (i.e., your family) changes – it has effectively been demoted.

This can stress some dogs so much that behavioural problems surface. New parents are sometimes shocked to see their trusted pet develop naughty or even aggressive, attention-seeking behaviour that, at its worst, can become the equivalent of sibling rivalry.

The trick to keeping your baby safe and your dog happy is to **gradually** get your pet used to changes **before** the baby arrives. Prospective parents may consider adding some of the following items to their 'baby preparations' list:

- Train your dog to stay away from the 'baby' room, or block access to it if necessary. (Pets should never be left unsupervised near babies.)
- If you change your dog's sleeping place, make the new area comfortable and clearly recognisable – use the same, familiar basket and blankets, etc. Spending quality time there together will help your dog to settle in.
- Gradually introduce the new 'walking' routine (start making walks shorter or less frequent).
- If you haven't already done so, train your dog not to jump up on you uninvited. (You will soon be carrying around your baby.)
- If your dog is very closely bonded with the mum-to-be, encourage others in the family to spend more time with your pet.
- Set up new baby furniture early (e.g. prams, high chairs, cots, etc.) so that your dog can get used to them.
- Arranging your dog's annual vet-check before the baby arrives leaves you with one less job to do after the big day.

Julie Murphy, Darebin resident, mother, zoologist & children's writer.

Choking & suffocation

- Never give nuts to children under 5 years of age.
- Carrots and other hard fruit and vegetables should be cooked, mashed or grated.
- Encourage children to remain seated while eating.
- Any object that is small enough to fit into a film canister can choke a child less than three years of age.
- Tie a knot in plastic bags to avoid suffocation.
- Remove heavy lids from toy boxes to ensure that fingers don't get trapped.

Tips from the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne 2008 fact sheet: Choking & Suffocation

Falls prevention

Falls are the most common single cause of hospital-treated injury in all age groups. From the time your child starts to roll, crawl and climb there is the ever-present risk of falls. Slips and falls can be a normal part of growing up, for example when a child is learning to walk. Many falls are not serious and may simply result in a bump or bruise; others may result in fractures, cuts or head injuries. There are many actions you can take to prevent the more serious injuries.

Furniture & beds

Children can sustain serious harm including head injuries after falling from nursery furniture.

If your child is continually trying to climb out of the cot leave the sides down. When your child is ready to move from a cot to a bed, place a mattress on the floor to soften a fall. Bunk beds are not recommended for children under 9 years of age. Do not let children play on bunk bed and ensure top bunk beds have a guardrail.

Excerpt from the Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre, Melbourne 2008 Fact Sheet: Preventing Falls

Bike riding with kids



People often say it's unsafe to ride bikes nowadays, but the statistics don't back that up.

In fact, one is far more likely to be seriously injured in a car accident than on a bicycle.

There are many areas that benefit from bicycle riding including: health, environment, community and wallets. In addition, it's a lot of fun and can provide kids with confidence and independence.

Many bicycle accidents are due to rider inexperience. Ride regularly with your children and instil in them safe riding practices. Let them get plenty of experience. Instead of walking or driving to school, kindergarten, crèche, library or shops, consider riding, at least part of the way. Until confident, stick to the footpath when accompanying a child under 12 (this is legal in Victoria).

Resources:

- Cycling and Safety: www.cyclingpromotion.com.au/content/view/347/150/
- Child Safety and Bike Riding: www.cyclingpromotion.com.au/resources/cycling-tips/children-and-cycling.html
- Cycling Safety Tips Videos: www.cyclingpromotion.com.au/content/view/384/147/
- Mums (& Dads) on Bikes - see What's On p.8 for further details or contact Kathy: 9489 4275 / 0410 667 634; kbrunning@bigpond.com; www.darebinbug.org.au

Bike maintenance and safety:

A bike in good nick will provide a pleasurable and safe ride. It is very important to include your child in regular maintenance of their bikes, such as pumping up tyres, cleaning the frame and oiling the chain.

It is very important to ensure handlebar ends are capped. If a finger can be inserted in an end of a handlebar, it is dangerous. Bike shops stock bar ends, though a simple device is a cork inserted in the end and cut to size.

It is a requirement that all bicycle riders (and passengers, such as children in trailers and child seats) wear a helmet that meets the Australian standard. Helmets should be snug, so that a person can shake their head and the helmet doesn't move. The helmet should largely cover the forehead: hold two fingers across the forehead above the eyebrows – this is where the tip of the helmet should be. Do not wear caps under helmets: hard bits can be jammed into the head in an accident.

You can learn to fix your bike for free, or low cost, at:

- Bike Shed at CERES, East Brunswick: www.thebikeshed.org.au
- Loophole Community Centre, Thornbury: www.loophole.shiftingspace.coop
- Many bike shops run courses for a price, You may like to ask your local bike shop if they have a suitable course.

Resources:

- Basic Bicycle Maintenance: www.cyclingpromotion.com.au/content/view/271/147/
- Cycling Tips postcard for schools and school children www.cyclingpromotion.com.au/content/view/375/147/

Directory:

Online forums to talk to other parents about riding with children:

- Melbourne Cyclist – amongst its groups are *Mums, dads and kids* and *Starting out*: www.melbournecyclist.com
- Bicycle Victoria – one of its forums is *Parents and teachers discussion*, under the banner Ride2School: www.bv.com.au/forums/index.php

Storing breastmilk @ home

Breastmilk	Room Temperature	Refrigerator	Freezer
Freshly expressed into a closed container	6–8 hrs (26°C or lower)	If refrigeration is available store milk there 3–5 days (4°C or lower) Store in back of refrigerator where it is coldest	2 weeks in freezer compartment inside freezer section of refrigerator. 3 months in refrigerator with separate door. 6-12 months in deep freeze (-18°C or lower).
Previously frozen—thawed in refrigerator but not warmed	4 hours or less (ie the next feeding)	Store in refrigerator 24 hours	Do not refreeze
Thawed outside refrigerator in warm water	For completion of feeding	Hold for 4 hours or until next feeding	Do not refreeze
Infant has begun feeding	Only for completion of feeding, then discard	Discard	Discard

Thawing & warming breastmilk

Expressed milk will separate into several layers – this is normal so just give the container a shake. Milk freezes in these neat layers, but is readily mixed once thawed.

- 1 Frozen milk may be thawed in the refrigerator over 24 hours, OR warmed QUICKLY, but not in boiling water, as the milk will curdle. Do NOT leave it to stand at room temperature.
- 2 Place the container under running cold water, gradually allowing the water to get warmer until the milk becomes liquid.
- 3 Warm chilled or thawed breastmilk in a jug or saucepan of hot water or in an electric drink heater, until milk reaches body temperature. Test temperature by dropping a little onto your wrist. Some mothers and babies are happy to use the milk thawed but not warmed.
- 4 A microwave oven should not be used to thaw or heat milk as it heats unevenly and may cause burning of a baby's mouth. Research also suggests that microwaving changes the immunological and nutrient quality of breastmilk.
- 5 It is not necessary to boil your expressed breastmilk if it is to be given to your baby.

For further information, refer to the Australian Breastfeeding Association booklet, *Expressing and Storing Breastmilk*.

Available from Mother's Direct: www.mothersdirect.com.au

This information has been provided by your local Darebin Australian Breastfeeding Group. If you would like to get involved with this group phone Michelle on 9478 7974.

Go to www.breastfeeding.asn.au to get a fact sheet on Breastfeeding and Swine Flu, July 2009.



What's on

★ Oct 14, **First Aid for Parents**, 6.45-9pm, cost \$40
To book ph: 8470 8100

★ Oct 26 **Children's Week**

★ **Community Safety Month** – October 2009
October is Community Safety Month and the Great Edwardes Lake Walk is on again!

To celebrate Community Safety Month 2009, come along with your friends and family to enjoy

The Great Edwardes Lake Walk
on **Thursday 1 October 2009**.

The walk will depart at **7pm** from the shelter shed near the playground at Edwardes Lake Park; entry off Griffiths St, Reservoir.

Entertainment will be provided along the way by the FireWorks Dance Company and showbags will be available for the kids. The walk will be followed by a barbeque dinner at **8pm** and a performance by a live band.

This is a **FREE** event and everyone is welcome to join in!

The Great Merri Creek Walk in Northcote will also be happening as part of Community Safety Month. Keep a look out for more information on these Community Safety Events over the coming months or contact the City of Darebin.

Ph: 8470 8594 or email: jfraser@darebin.vic.gov.au
Multilingual Telephone Line: 8470 8470



★ **Mums (& Dads) on Bikes**

Free monthly bike rides are led by local mum and bike education instructor, Kathy Brunning. The rides welcome families of all abilities and kids in tow or on their own bikes, even with training wheels. The rides head to child-friendly destinations on off-road paths and quiet back streets, and are deliberately short to enable even little kids to complete them.

Kathy's motto is:

No one is too slow; we're happy to stop for a rest, play, snack, breastfeed, nappy change or till a tantrum is over.

- Sept 6 (Father's Day) - CERES Environment Park, East Brunswick
- Oct 4 - Scienceworks Museum, Spotswood (includes trains and punt)
- Nov 1 - Heide Museum of Modern Art, Bulleen (includes train)
- Dec 6 - Melbourne Zoo, Parkville

★ **FREE Nappy Education classes**

Sept 5 & 6, Oct 3 & 4, Nov 7 & 8

To book ph: 9481 6044

or email: dialanappy@netspace.net.au

★ **Parenting 3-10 year olds**, term 4
to find out more contact Anglicare 8470 9999

★ **Parenting adolescents group**, term 4
to find out more contact Anglicare 8470 9999,

★ **Rhythm and Rhyme** for babies aged between 8 weeks and 3 years and their parents who live in the East Reservoir area.

Enjoy an hour of rhymes, songs, and stories with your child, Learn new ways to cope & meet other parents. New parents welcome to join anytime!

When: Thursdays commencing 15 October 2009, 10am – 11.30am.

Where: 2A Cuthbert Rd, Reservoir
Childcare is available for siblings.

Facilitators: Sian & Paras 8470 999
(Anglicare, Darebin Best Start and Darebin Family Services)

★ **Sudanese Playgroup and Toddler Gym.**

Where: Lalor Park Primary School, Linoak Ave, Lalor (Darebin residents are welcome to attend these sessions)

When: Wednesdays commencing 13 October 2009.

Time: 9.30-12.00. Join anytime.

Facilitator: Vivienne 8470 9999

★ **FREE Sustainable Homes Program,**

- Sept 2, Create a Sustainable Garden, 6.45-9pm
- Oct 27, Sustainable Transport, 6.45-9pm
- Nov 15, Sustainable Homes Tour

www.sustainablehomes.vic.gov.au Ph: 8470 8373

★ **Walktober** www.walktober.com.au

★ Nov 21, **Darebin Libraries Family Fun Day**

10.30 am to 3.30pm

Northcote Library, 32-38 Separation St, Northcote (opposite Northcote Plaza Shopping Centre)
www.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au

Festivities include storytelling, face painting, live music, games, competitions, prizes and more!

Special guest: Maisy, from Lucy Cousins' books.

Getting there by public transport:

- Tram Route 86 - 2 min walk from stop 33, corner of High and Separation Sts (approx 100m)
- Bus Route 508 - 1 min walk from bus stop on Separation St (approx 100m)
- Bus Route 567 - 5 min walk from bus stop on Mitchell St near the corner of High St (approx 400m)
- Cycle Route - St Georges Rd shared off-road walking and cycling path (approx 700m); Mitchell St on-road bike lane (approx 400m); cycle parking available
- Epping Train Line - 5 min walk from Northcote Station (approx 500m)

★ Nov 25, **White Ribbon Day**

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

www.whiteribbonday.org.au



Did you know that children are more likely to be road transport accident victims as passengers rather than pedestrians? In 2007 almost three-quarters of children who died as a result of a road transport accident were passengers, with less than 20% pedestrians. The remaining 5% were cyclists or drivers.

Road safety tips for children 5-12 years

Parents/carers should provide plenty of practical supervised experience in using the road safely. Use journeys taken every day to best prepare children for independent travel.



Choose safe places to cross

Choosing a safe place to cross in traffic is very difficult. The safest places to cross the road are pedestrian or children's crossings and places where there is a clear view of traffic in each direction and enough gaps in the traffic to be able to cross safely. Children and parents/carers should together find the safest route for travelling to school.

Stop, Look, Listen and Think

Children should understand the correct road crossing procedure – STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK:

- ★ **STOP** one step back from the kerb or shoulder of the road if there is no footpath
- ★ **LOOK** in all directions for approaching traffic
- ★ **LISTEN** in all directions for approaching traffic
- ★ **THINK** about whether it is safe to cross the road – when the road is clear or all traffic has stopped

When crossing, walk straight across the road. Keep LOOKING and LISTENING for traffic while crossing

Bike safety

Children should always wear a helmet when riding a bicycle, or other wheeled toys such as skateboards and scooters. Children should not ride on the road without adult supervision and should keep to the footpath and bicycle paths – these are safer than the road. Children under 12 years of age may ride on the footpath, and so can any adults riding with them.



Supervising adults need to ensure children give way to pedestrians, look out before crossing driveways and stop before crossing roads. Children are most frequently injured when entering a road from a driveway.

Poisoning prevention

Poisoning is the second leading cause of hospital treated injury in children 0 – 4 years of age in Victoria.

The most common causes of poisoning in children under 5 years of age are as follows:

Drugs and medications

- Paracetamol
- Cough and cold medicines eg. Demazin, Dimetapp
- Antibiotics

Household chemicals

- Pesticides, rat and mice baits
- Cleaning agents – general purpose or hard surface cleaners
- Soaps, sink detergents
- Dishwasher powders or tablets
- Bleaches

Others include: cosmetics, essential oils, iron tablets and moth balls

Tips to reduce the risk of poisoning:

- Store medicines immediately after they have been bought in a cabinet/cupboard with a child resistant lock or a locked box in the fridge.
- Do not refer to medicines as 'lollies'.
- Dispose of out-of-date and unwanted medicines and chemicals by returning them to the pharmacy.
- Be aware of handbags. Keep visitors', (including grandparents') handbags out of reach of children as they may contain medicines.
- Make sure dishwashing cleaners are in child resistant containers.
- Store medicines and chemicals in their original containers.
- Consider using alternative cleaning products eg. vinegar and bicarbonate soda – great for the environment too!
- Remove all poisonous plants from the garden. Check out this website www.rch.org.au/poisons to find a list of poisonous plants.

**The Royal Children's Hospital
Safety Centre, Melbourne 2008
www.rch.org.au/safetycentre
the Poisons Information Centre
ph: 13 11 26 (24 hrs, Australia wide)**

Best Start

www.beststart.vic.gov.au



Best Start works to strengthen links across the services that provide support for families and children in their early years.

★ Working with kindergartens and schools

Best Start has been working with the Early Years Transition Network on developing a common framework for transition to school. This is still in discussion at the principals' networks for action in 2010.

A Best Start resource kit of multilingual materials for parents in Darebin *Being Prepared for School can be Practiced* was launched by Professor Sue Dockett and distributed to primary schools in July.

Parents can expect to see the materials as part of the enrolment processes with some tips on early preparation. Professor Dockett also was warmly received by a large number of parents attending the evening forum where she spoke on the parent's role in transition to school.

★ Working with health services, early childhood services and language

Best Start has funded a very successful pilot project led by Darebin Community Health speech pathologists, working with Darebin Early Years and Children's Services staff and teachers in selected kindergartens.

Resource folders have been developed for staff, including a series of thematic kits to use with children. Workshops and professional training visits for staff have occurred which have increased the teachers' understanding of oral language and language development, and assisted them in identifying and supporting children in their regular kindergarten programs.

★ Working on ways to engage with services & families

Best Start has a role in supporting increased access to services for disadvantaged or vulnerable families.

Through three different projects Best Start has supported a series of targeted activity days as engagement strategies for families not accessing services. This has been an opportunity for services to work together and outreach some of their activity into different settings and to try new ways of working with community members.

The Best Start program will further investigate ways to communicate key messages to families and opportunities to make linkages.



Books about safety

Here are a few samples of books and a DVD on Safety that are available to borrow from the Darebin Libraries:

Dorothy Baldwin and Claire Lister

Safety at school (Junior non-fiction)

Sue Barraclough

Home safety (Picture book)

Sue Barraclough

Water safety (Picture book)

Sue Barraclough

Your own safety (Picture book)

Donna Chalet and Francine Russell

The safe zone: a child's guide to personal safety (Junior non-fiction)

Kerry Cook

The ABC of child safety: a handy guide to childproofing your home (Adult non-fiction)

Caroline Hardy

Busy places: a child safety book (Picture book)

Caroline Hardy

Dangerous places: a home safety book (Picture book)

Claire Llewellyn

On the road (Junior non-fiction)

Claire Llewellyn

Out and about (Junior non-fiction)

Andrew Pattison

Doctor Toby talks about safety and first aid (Junior non-fiction)

Gil Pittar

Milly, Molly and Oink (Picture book)

Jennifer Bright Reich

The baby-proofing bible: the exceedingly thorough guide to keeping your child safe from crib to kitchen to car to yard (Adult non-fiction)

Pete Sanders

Be safe near water (Junior non-fiction)

Pete Sanders and Steve Myers

Personal safety (Junior non-fiction)

Pat Thomas

I can be safe: a first look at safety (Junior non-fiction)

Guide to baby safety (Adult DVD)

Sleeping safely

Make sure your baby's head remains uncovered during sleep.

Put your baby on the back to sleep.

Tuck in your baby's bedclothes securely.

Position your baby's feet at the bottom of the cot.



Do not put your baby on a water bed or bean bag.

Use a firm, clean, well-fitting mattress.

Quilts, doonas, duvets, pillows, soft toys and cot bumpers in the cot are not recommended.

Tips for choosing cots:

Australian Standards for new and second-hand cots should carry the label AS2172

Portable cots should carry the Australian Standard AS2195

For further information go to the consumer affairs website www.consumer.gov.au and search for the publication *Keeping Baby Safe*.

www.sidsandkids.org

6 steps to safely patting a strange dog

I think it's safe to say that most children love dogs. They love to pat dogs – any dogs. Toddlers in the playground take off like heat-seeking missiles towards any furry creature with four feet that happens to walk past. For a young child, a positive patting experience can set the scene for a lifetime of rewarding interactions with animals. A bad experience, however, could result in injury and an ongoing fear of dogs. Following these six simple steps will help to ensure that your toddler stays safe and happy when patting strange dogs:

- 1 Before getting close, check if the dog is on a leash. Dogs that are not on leash cannot be reliably controlled in unpredictable situations (e.g. if an aggressive dog approaches).
- 2 Only approach dogs that already seem comfortable and content.
- 3 Calmly and quietly approach the dog and its handler, and **ask** whether it's okay to pat the dog. Some dogs are not used to children and should be avoided. For the same reason, it's best not to pat unattended dogs restrained outside milk bars – you can't know if a dog is okay with kids without asking its owner.
- 4 Stand next to the dog and hold out a relaxed hand to be sniffed. (Standing in front of the dog may appear aggressive or dominant; standing behind could startle an old dog that can't hear or see properly.)
- 5 With an open hand, encourage your child to gently stroke the dog on its back or neck, in a head-to-tail

direction. Be ready to receive a 'sneak lick' from a friendly dog, in which case you just smile and say something along the lines of "He likes you!" to show that there is no reason to be frightened.

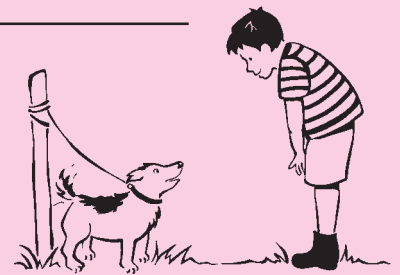
- 6 Don't forget to thank the dog's handler for kindly sharing their pet with you.

Both children and animals can be unpredictable, but you can gradually work towards the controlled procedure outlined above through discussion and practice. It helps to have talks with your toddler about how to pat dogs at times when there are no dogs around. (Your toddler will be far too preoccupied to listen to you once they have a real dog in their sights!)

Incorporate a talk into reading time:

Can I Pat That Dog? by Susan McLaine and Margaret Power Pymble is an excellent non-fiction picture book for 4-8 year olds. It is available from all the Darebin Library branches. After reading this book together, children could practice their patting technique on a soft toy.

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Darebin resident, mother, zoologist
& children's writer.
www.members.optusnet.com.au/~julieamurphy/





Other useful resources

★ Download previous issues of *the Parent Voice* at www.darebin.vic.gov.au

★ **Australian Breastfeeding Association**
www.breastfeeding.asn.au
Helpline ph: 1800 mum2mum
1800 686 2686

★ **Better Health Channel:**
Child safety – playground equipment
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Child_safety_playground_equipment

★ **Child Safety Australia**
www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au/

★ **Child safety – RACV**
www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Child_Safety

★ **How safe is your car?**
Facts for drivers – child safety
www.howsafeisyourcar.com.au/child_safety.php

★ **Kidsafe Victoria**
www.kidsafevic.com.au/

★ **Parentline** Ph: 13 22 89
www.parentline.vic.gov.au
A Statewide phone counselling, information & referral service for parents & carers of children 0 – 18years.

★ **Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre**
Ph: 9345 5085
email: safetycentre@rch.org.au
www.rch.org.au/safetycentre

★ **Poisons Information Centre**
Ph: 13 11 26 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

★ **Police, Ambulance, Fire** Ph: 000

★ **Websites for pets:**
www.pets.info.vic.gov.au

★ **websites for bikes:**
www.cyclingpromotion.com.au
Bicycle Victoria www.bv.com.au
www.melbournecyclist.com
www.thebikeshed.org.au
www.loophole.shiftingspace.coop



Multilingual Telephone Line: 8470 8470
Linea Telefonica Multilingue: 8470 8470
Πολυγλωσσική Τηλεφωνική Γραμμή: 8470 8470
多語種專線: 8470 8470
8470 تاغزللا ددعتملا فتاهلا مقر : 8470
Повекејазична Телефонска Линија на 8470 8470
Đường dây Điện thoại Đa Ngôn Ngữ: 8470 8470

Child car restraints – THE NEW RULES

From 9 November 2009, children will need to use a restraint or booster seat until their seventh birthday.

If a car has two or more rows of seats, children under four must not travel in the front seat.

If all seats, other than the front seats, are being used by children under seven years, children aged between four and six years (inclusive) may travel in the front seat, provided they use an approved child restraint or booster seat.

Taxis will continue to be exempt from the child restraint requirements however, parents are encouraged to use their own restraints in taxis where possible.

For more information about child restraints and the new rules, visit the VicRoads website at www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/ChildRestraints or phone 1300 360 745

The Parent Voice is a seasonal newsletter for Darebin parents, to improve links in the community and promote health and wellbeing.

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