

Monthly Newsletter

BEPS OSHC

February 2025

Welcome to the first monthly newsletter of 2025!

We are incredibly thankful to have you as part of the BEPS OSHC community in 2025. The team of OSHC educators is looking forward to helping every child, learn, and thrive in our care.

As we warm into the year, we're excited about the opportunities and activities February brings. For our Preps and new families, this is a time for discovering communities, adjusting to new routines, and becoming familiar with the structures of OSHC. Our team of educators are committed to ensuring that these transitions are smooth, and that every child is comfortable, safe, and happy in our care.

In 2025 our service will continue to provide high-quality care through a child-centred pedagogical framework. Our planned activities will ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive within their current domains of curiosity, and extend the breadth and depth of their interests.

ON *this* MONTH

TODAY'S NEWSLETTER

Parenting Blog Recommendations

Banana Cake Recipe

Article: The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

Article: Co-Regulate and Co-Dysregulate

Road Safety for Families

Upcoming Community Dates!

Groundhog Day ----- 2nd Feb

Groundhog Day ----- 2nd Feb

National Pizza Day ----- 9th Feb

Valentines Day ----- 14th Feb

Random Act of Kindness Day ----- 17th Feb



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WORLD READ ALOUD DAY – FEB 5

Literacy is not a gift given just to some lucky ones, it is a foundational human right that brings joy, economic independence, gender equity and a pathway out of poverty.

Join millions around the globe as we celebrate the power of reading aloud with **World Read Aloud Day**. This year marks the 15th anniversary of **WRAD**. Follow this link to download the World Read Aloud Day activity practise **Learn more here**

WORLD WETLANDS DAY – FEB 2

Nearly 90% of the world’s wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s, and we are losing wetlands three times faster than forests. Yet, wetlands are critically important ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, freshwater availability, world economies and more. **Find out more here.**

BEST BLOGS

OH SO BUSY MUM

ohsobusymum.com.au/

Oh so busy mum is full of tasty recipes, family travel tips and mum topics. Cheree Lawrence (AKA Oh So Busy Mum) has been blogging since 2014 and her following continues to grow.

Here you will find a huge selection of lunch box inspiration as well as easy and fun ideas to get your child eating healthily. From budget tips to life as a mum of 4!

THE INSPIRED TREEHOUSE

theinspiredtreehouse.com

The Inspired Treehouse is lead by paediatric occupational and physical therapists who are passionate about sharing information, tips, and strategies to help readers conquer the common developmental roadblocks that come up for kids.

They believe that the more parents, teachers, and caregivers know about child development and wellness, the better off kids are! Follow their website or Facebook for easy-to implement activities that are designed to promote all kinds of developmental skills for kids.

BANANA CAKE

PREP 20 min | COOK 30 min | SERVES 16



INGREDIENTS

3 overripe bananas , <i>mashed</i> .	2 eggs
3/4 cup olive oil	1 cup Greek yoghurt
1/2 cup brown sugar	1/3 cup pure maple syrup
1 tbs vanilla bean paste	1 cup buckwheat flour
1 cup plain flour	1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cinnamon , <i>ground</i>	1/2 tsp nutmeg , <i>ground</i>
1/4 tsp ginger , <i>ground</i>	pinch of salt

Whipped Ricotta Maple & Chocolate Frosting

2 cups fresh ricotta	1/2 cup pure maple syrup
2 tsp vanilla bean paste	1/2 cup cocoa powder

METHOD:

To make the banana cake:

1. **Preheat** oven to 180 C (350 F) and line a 20 cm x 20 cm brownie pan with baking paper. Set aside.
2. **Place** the mashed bananas, eggs, olive oil, yoghurt, sugar, syrup and vanilla and whisk to combine.
3. **Sift** the buckwheat flour, plain flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and salt into the bowl and stir using a wooden spoon until just combined.
4. **Pour** the batter into the prepared tin.
5. **Bake** for 30-40 minutes or until a skewer inserted removes cleanly.
6. **Allow** the cake to cool completely. To speed up the cooling process, feel free to pop the cake into the freezer.

To make the whipped ricotta maple and chocolate frosting:

1. **Place** the ricotta into the bowl of a food processor and blitz for 1-2 minutes or until smooth.
2. **Add** the maple syrup, vanilla and cocoa powder and blitz for 2-3 minutes (scraping down the sides of the bowl) or until the frosting is smooth and luscious.
3. **Smother** the cooled cake with a thick layer of frosting.
4. **Cut** into 9 or 16 squares. Enjoy x

Recipe and image from mylovelylittlelunchbox.com.



HEALTH & SAFETY: The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise

The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise and Physical Activity

Have you been feeling down lately? Try exercising to help improve your mood! Exercise can:



How do you feel after a workout? Even when you're purple faced and desperate for a lie-down, you feel pretty pleased with yourself for giving it a go, right? Once the initial breathlessness subsides after a workout, it's common to feel like you have more energy and those troublesome problems might not seem quite so big as before. While they might seem intangible these benefits are as real as – and arguably more important than – the results you see around your waistline. "A prescription of exercise can help you have a healthy mind," says GP Dr Paul Stillman, from Media Medics. "Exercise stimulates positive endorphins, clears your head and lifts your mood. I think we'll see more and more people prescribed exercise as a mood-booster."

Healthy body = healthy mind

We're starting to realise just how vital exercise is for our wellbeing, both mental and physical. New research from the Department of Health published in October 2017, reported 12 per cent of cases of depression could be prevented with an hour of exercise each week. Up your workouts to three a week and you could reduce your risk of depression by 30 per cent.

Can exercise help you handle stress?

Sure thing. A team of neurologists at Stanford Medical School, U.S., studied brain scans and found regular exercisers have more grey matter in the prefrontal cortex, which governs stress-management. But when we feel down, everything can feel overwhelming. Time to crawl into a hole? In fact, the more stressed out you feel, the more you need to look after yourself – and a workout can be the happiest medicine. Research has shown that exercise is clinically proven to stimulate serotonin, your natural feel-good neurotransmitter.

Does exercise help anxiety? "Running gives me the headspace to focus on what I'm feeling when my anxiety gets really bad," says Cardiff student Seren Pritchard-Bland, 21, who ran the London Marathon for the mental health charity Heads Together.

"I get panic attacks when I'm stressed out, but I find simply getting out of the house with my trainers on makes me feel like I've achieved something positive. Running is therapeutic – it's so much healthier than being alone at home with thoughts spinning around my head."

Why is exercise such a mood-booster? "Exercise is fantastic for releasing tension, reducing stress and giving joy," says Hayley Jarvis, programme manager for sport at the mental health charity Mind. "Being active is one of the best things you can do to help yourself bounce back in times of adversity. Getting out of your head and into your body can actually improve your ability to think clearly and break up your racing thoughts."

Find your mood-boosting workout If the thought of hauling yourself out of bed to jump around feels as impossible as climbing Everest, start slow. You can always stop if you're not feeling it, but all it takes is a few minutes of low-intensity exercise – even just walking – to trigger the release of pain-relieving endorphins. Every stretch releases tension and every movement makes oxygen flow a little faster. Look out for your tipping point, because the more aware you are of the moment your mood warms up, the better it feels.

Which workout will make you happy? *To build friendships...* try team sports like football and netball. "Social connectivity is incredibly important," says Hayley. "When we're struggling we tend to isolate ourselves, but being with other people can motivate you to get out there. Playing team sports is great if you feel lonely."

To calm your mind... try yoga, Pilates and tai chi. Hayley explains: "Exercise that works with your breath is particularly good for improving mindfulness, which can also calm a spinning head and improve your mood."



More information available via the QR code.

Source: thebodycoach.com (2018, November 29). The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise Retrieved from www.thebodycoach.com



FOCUS: Co-Regulate or Co-Dysregulate

All children can behave in ways that are ... not very adorable. Big behaviour can be exhausting and maddening for even the calmest of parents. There's a good reason for this. Children create their distress in their important adults as a way to share the emotional load when that load gets too heavy. This is how it's meant to be. In the same way that children weren't meant to carry big physical loads on their own, they also weren't meant to carry big emotional loads. Big feelings and big behaviour are a call to us for support to help them with that emotional load. When you are in front of a child with big feelings, whatever you are feeling is likely to be a reflection of what your child is feeling. If you are frustrated, angry, helpless, scared, it's likely that they are feeling that way too. Every response in you is relevant.

Children communicate through behaviour, and behind all big behaviour there will always be a valid need. The need might be for safety, connection, sleep, food, power and influence, space to do their own thing. We all have these needs, but children are still developing the capacity to meet them in ways that aren't as disruptive for them or the people around them. This will take a while. The part of the brain that can calm big feelings, the prefrontal cortex, isn't fully developed until mid to late twenties. Of course, as they grow and develop, they will expand their capacity to calm their big feelings, but in the meantime, they will need lots of co-regulation experiences with us to help them develop strong neural foundations for this.

But how do we help them? The most powerful language for any nervous system is another nervous system. They will catch our distress (as we will catch theirs) but they will also catch our calm. It can be tempting to move them to independence on this too quickly and insist they self-regulate, but it just doesn't work this way. Children can only learn to self-regulate with lots (and lots and lots) of experience co-regulating. Regulation isn't something that can be taught. It's something that has to be experienced through co-regulation over and over. It's like so many things – driving a car, playing the piano – we can talk all we want about 'how' but it's not until we 'do' – over and over – that we get better at it. Emotional regulation works the same way. It's not until children have repeated experiences with an adult bringing them back to calm, that they develop the vital neural pathways to come back to calm on their own.

How exactly do I co-regulate? The first thing to remember is that as much as you might want to fix your young one's feelings, you don't need to. They're safe. They might be struggling, but they're safe. As maddening as those big feelings might be, they're doing an important job – recruiting support (you) to help that young, still-in-development nervous system find its way home. When their feelings are big, it's more about who you are or how you are than what you do. They don't want to be fixed. They want to be seen and heard. They're no different to us like that. Meet them where they are, without needing them to be different for a while. Feel what they feel with a strong, steady heart. They will feel you there with them. They will see it in you and feel it in you that you get them, that you can handle whatever they are feeling, and that you are there. This will help calm them more than anything. We feel safest when we are 'with'. Feel the feeling, breathe, and be with – and you don't need to do more than that. You might not be able to do this every time, and that's okay. Here's how that works. We will catch their distress, as we are meant to. This gives us the opportunity to hold that distress with them, until those feelings start to soften. This can be a great thing when we have the emotional resources to do this, but we are human, and sometimes their fight or flight will raise fight or flight in us. We might get angry or frustrated (sharing their 'fight') or turn away and distract (sharing their 'flight'). Sometimes you'll be able to

give them what they need, and sometimes you won't. Both are responses of loving, beautiful parents, but sometimes as parents we get stretched too far too.

Whenever you can, validate what they are feeling, but let your intentions be clear. This means steering away from neutral voices or neutral faces. It's hard to read the intentions behind a low-monotone, neutral voice or a neutral face. If your intention isn't clear, it can trigger a bigger sense of 'threat' in an already unhappy nervous system. Sometimes, we might think we're speaking calmly when we're actually speaking 'neutrally', or low, slow, and monotone. The point is our calm voice might not always be calming. Whenever you can, try to match the intensity of your child's feelings (through your voice tone, facial expressions, presence) while staying open, warm, and regulated. 'I can see how upset you are my darling. You really wanted [...] and you're so annoyed that it can't happen.'

What if they want space, or less words? If they get annoyed with too many words, just breathe and be with, 'I'm going to stay with you until you feel better.' You actually don't have to say anything at all if talking doesn't feel right. Just stay regulated and feel what they feel. They'll feel it in you that you get them. Similarly, if they want space, it's important to respect that, but stay in emotional proximity. 'Okay, I'm just going to stay over here until you feel better. I'll be right here for you.'

But what if their big feelings are driving BIG behaviour? (Follow the link below to read this paragraph)

Your own state matters. An important part of co-regulation is making sure we are guiding that nervous system with tender, gentle hands and a steady heart. This is where our own self-regulation becomes important. Our nervous systems speak to each other every moment of every day. When our children are distressed, we will start to feel that distress. It becomes a loop. We feel what they feel, they feel what we feel. Our capacity to self-regulate is the circuit breaker. This can be so tough, but it can happen in microbreaks. A few strong steady breaths can calm our own nervous system, which we can then use to calm theirs. Breathe and be with. It's that simple, but so tough to do some days. But we must be radically kind with ourselves too. It takes a steady heart to soothe the heart of another and being that steady heart can be tough some days. Parenting is hard, and days will be hard, and on many of those days we'll feel the rawness and realness of it all. We'll say things we shouldn't say and do things we shouldn't do. We're human. Let's not put pressure on our children to be perfect by pretending that we are. Instead, let's repair the ruptures as soon as we can, and bathe them abundantly in love and the warmth of us. It's not about perfection, it's about consistency, and honesty, and the way we respond to them the most.



Read the article via the QR code.

Source: Young, Karen. (2021). To Co-Regulate or Co-Dysregulate. What to do when their feelings or behaviour get big. Retrieved from www.heysigmund.com



Road Safety: How Families Can Keep their Children Safe on the Road.

250 children have been locked on left in cars in Victoria this year. In response to this, the Early Learning Association of Australia has developed a series of resources to help parents and carers keep their child safe in the car. The resources also support children to learn about road safety in their community.

It is important for parents and carers to know the type of child seat that is most appropriate and safe for their child. The infographic below provides a description of the four primary child seats, as well as guidelines for determining if your child is ready to move on to the next seat.



The '5-step test' to see if your child is ready to be in a seat belt should be conducted to determine whether a child is ready to progress onto using a regular seat belt. As a guideline, the child should be approximately 145cm to satisfy all 5 conditions of the test.

Child and booster seats should always have the rear tether strap secured to the correct anchor points, and should have an approved Australian Standard Sticker and labelling.



The ELLA resources also include a series of learning activities for families to complete with their children to support road safety. These include an activity to make, use, and read street signs (see right), creating road maps, and a street sign scavenger hunt.

[Click here to access the full document with resources and instructions for all the road safety activities.](#)



SCAN THE QR TO ACCESS THE FULL SUITE OF ROAD SAFETY RESOURCES.



HOW TO DO IT

Create your own road signs – they could be small for indoor play with toy cars or big for playing outside with bikes or scooters.

Draw shapes and decorate using this [link](#) to learn about the signs. You can also make signs that you see in your neighbourhood. Talk about what they mean with your child.

Small signs can be used with train sets or car tracks. When playing with your child you can talk about the signs and follow the rules. "Oh look, this is a stop sign. I need to stop here."

Large signs can be used outdoor to encourage active play and the actions while on their bike, scooter or walking and running around the garden.



Mental Health Services and Support

Beyond Blue

24/7 mental health support service

1300 22 4636
beyondblue.org.au

headspace

Online support and counselling to young people aged 12 to 25

1800 650 890
(9am to 1am daily)
headspace.org.au

Kids Helpline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services for children and young people aged 5 to 25

1800 55 1800
kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services

13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back

24/7 crisis support and counselling service for people affected by suicide

1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

13YARN

24/7 crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

13 92 76
13yarn.org.au

Mensline

24/7 counselling service for men

1300 78 99 78
mensline.org.au

1800 RESPECT

24/7 support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic violence and abuse

1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

QLife

LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral

1800 184 527
qlife.org.au

If you are concerned about someone at risk of immediate harm, call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.