

Happenings



the infants' home
CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

November/December 2017

www.theinfantshome.org.au

Carols by Twilight Friday 1st December

One of our favourite family events is Friday December 1st – Carols by Twilight. Please join us from 5.30-7.30pm on the main lawn for an evening of festive family fun. There will be a Dance-a-long with Santa's Elves, a Carols Sing-a-Long, Christmas raffle, BBQ dinner available to purchase and visits from Santa and Rudolf! So bring your picnic blanket and join in our last big celebration for 2017.

Crowdfunding Campaign for Rigby House

We are very excited to have launched The Infants' Home's first crowdfunding campaign in our final bid to raise funds to renovate Rigby House. Renovations will begin in late December and be complete for a fresh start in February 2018. Our target is at least \$10,000 and all funds raised will be matched by one of our generous donors – effectively doubling all donations.

If you have already supported this campaign—thank you! If not, we invite you to join in. Crowdfunding works best if everyone shares the message via email and social media, to help get lots of little donations to reach a target. We hope you can join us by donating a little to help achieve a big outcome.

Follow us on Facebook

Keep up to date on The Infants' Home's news and events, [here](#).



Seeking Records Search Volunteer

Are you interested in history, family trees, or are fascinated by old photographs and documents? We seek a volunteer with a keen eye for detail to help with records search enquiries, and to catalogue historical photographs and documents. If interested, please contact Anne-Marie: 8719 5002 or abyrne@theinfantshome.org.au

Children Move to New Rooms, Houses and Big School

Children in many of the Houses have been following new routines to help transition to a new room, a new centre or to 'big school' as their learning and development progresses. Educators have been working with children to help connect them to their new educators, teachers and environments to help children feel safe as well as to encourage both independence and interdependence.

This is also a momentous year for The Infants' Home. When our new Early Learning and Care Centre opened in 2013, it enabled us to increase the number of children in Murray and Gorton House's early education programs. Now, almost 100 children are ready to transition to 'big school', the largest group of 'graduates' we have ever had.

We are proud to see how ready children are for their next big adventure and, whilst it is hard to say goodbye to those children and families who are leaving us, we wish all of you the very best and hope you keep in touch.

End of Year House Parties

We welcome families to attend End of Year Parties at your child's House(s). Signs are up at the entrances of each House with dates, details and times as below.

Dates for Your Diary

- **Carols by Twilight**, Friday 1st Dec, 5.30-7.30

End of Year Parties for each House:

- **Gorton House:** Friday 1st December, 4-5.30pm
- **Johnson House Preschool:**
Wednesday 13th December, from 4.30pm
- **Johnson House Toddlers:**
Thursday 7th December, 4- 5.30pm
- **Murray House:** Wednesday 6th December 4-6pm
- **Robinson House:**
Tuesday 5th December, 4.30-5.45pm.

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Gorton Babies

Children have been doing a lot of pretending, dressing up and role playing lately. Part of understanding our own sense of identity, and the world around us, is working out the roles people have and how they work in a group.

Doing this through play comes naturally to children as curious, persistent and creative learners, transferring knowledge from one area of life or learning to another. These experiences have offered us lots of opportunities to learn from others, resolve conflict, act prosocially and inclusively. Educators have taken intentional teaching opportunities and spontaneous teachable moments to model, guide, co-learn and discuss play and relationships in context.

As we all mature, learn every day and build our skills and dispositions for learning, educators have recently noted how the children are taking on new challenges. As part of learning about risk taking, educators have supported children in this learning drive by resetting the obstacle course, and setting up different experiences that offer new things and old things in different ways.



Our older babies are fast transiting to toddlers. They are LOVING (big understatement!!) their morning and afternoon visits to the toddler area, particularly the new equipment and water play. They look forward to these visits and are getting to know the educators and their way around the new environment. We are excited for them to be so comfortable, secure and supported in this transition.



Gorton Toddlers

Greetings and welcome to another fun-filled edition of Parent Happenings. A lot has been happening in the toddler room recently and we are keen to share their learning and discovery with you.

You may have noticed changes to the room in regards to areas dedicated to specific interest areas, for example, the jungle area set up near the back of the room. This has been incredibly popular since it was established; the children flock to it continually over the course of the day. The area itself was born out of an interest in dinosaurs, and continual animated dinosaur play. The question was posed to us as to how we might extend the children's interest in these prehistoric noise makers while still maintaining the integrity and functionality of the room. Enter Gunjan and Sima and the creation of..."the jungle". The level of involvement in this area has been great to witness, and the manner in which children have extended their own play and have applied their social skills and personal experiences to different role play scenarios has been really interesting. Educators have noticed children embracing the jungle with an interest towards all animals, not just dinosaurs. This area has also become a great place for children to enrich their language and cognitive development, as they are using it to explore animal-based literature and pictures. If you, your friends or family have any old dinosaur or animal books or toys at home that you are no longer using, please consider contributing these to our jungle area. It really was an inspired decision to create special play environment: kudos to Gunjan and Sima!

Another popular combination interest at the moment is cooking and the Chinese Restaurant area. Widad and a selection of children came up with the idea of creating a Chinese Restaurant in the 'home corner' after a conversation one morning about what the children had been doing on the weekend. With this knowledge fresh in their minds, as well as more than a handful of willing helpers, Widad set about creating the restaurant and furnishing it with related props.



The 'restaurant' area became so popular and real for the children that educators found themselves planning a variety of cooking experiences.

Cooking experiences are a great way to promote cognitive development and problem solving as well as providing children with firsthand experience of prosocial skills such as sharing and taking turns. These experiences also help to create and strengthen peer bonds by providing a common interest and group activity where they work towards a common goal.

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Our cooking experiences started out with fried rice and spring rolls, (ironically served up at lunch time on pizza day) and from there it was on to making vegetarian dumplings – at one point we even managed to include a few interesting-looking carrots from the Gorton House vegetable garden. The restaurant has proven quite popular and outside of the odd fusion creation ('salt coffee' anyone?), we have seen that children in the toddler room are quite experienced when it comes to restaurant and café dining, and this provides a great opportunity for them to apply the skills they've gained at home, here at The Infants' home. We look forward to updating you on more restaurant news in future.

The garden continues to grow and develop. We are proud to say that we have picked and sampled our first batch of mini carrots, and have decorated the yard with some new floral arrangements. If you have not been in the centre our in the yard recently, we encourage you to take a look at the large planter boxes that act as a fence between our yard and the nursery: our pots of colour and new climbers will give us greenery and random bursts of colours by end of year.

The development of the garden has been a slow but constant process this year and the children have gained a lot from this process and are now really starting to show an active, hands-on interest in maintaining it as well.

The children have even started policing the garden themselves – we have a couple very alert, very diligent garden guards that remind their peers if they are getting too close to the plants. It is really great to see children take ownership of the process that they have been so actively involved in.



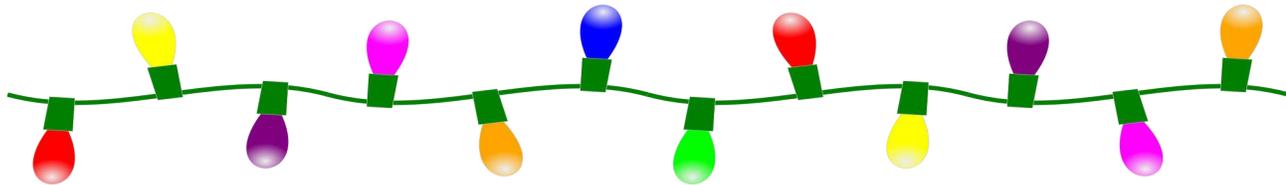
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With Christmas rapidly approaching we are about to enter our own festive season and celebrations at Gorton House. We are planning to put up a Christmas tree, which we hope to adorn with handmade decorations and baubles that are significant to your families and the children themselves.

There has been interest so far in Christmas songs or carols, and there has already been talk of presents and what happens on Christmas morning. This interest area is growing rapidly, and the concept will manifest itself physically throughout the room in no time at all.

Pre-school transition visits have already commenced on an informal basis, and the first group of children will start transitioning from the 18th December, 2017, If you are unsure of which group your child is in and when they will officially move to the preschool room, please ask one of the educators and they will be happy to let you know.

Please remember that, as the weather warms up, sunscreen needs to be applied and hats must be worn. Please also remember that children should have an ample supply of spare clothes as water play opportunities will only increase from this point of the year.

Thank you

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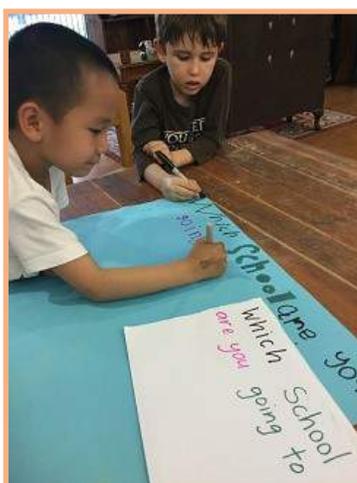
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Gorton Preschool

With many of our children heading off to school in 2018 and visiting their schools for orientation, starting school has been a very regular topic of conversation. As children began to discuss and compare which school they were to attend, we decided to make a display so that information was visible and accessible. This display proved to be another catalyst for even further discussion.

Some children told us what their school looked like, others drew pictures of their school and friends, and others talked about what they did when they visited school. We noticed during these discussions that some things were similar to preschool. For example, the new schools had a playground to play in, and they could draw and play. However, some things were different, a bell rang to remind you to line up, and you put your bag on a hook, or went to assembly. By supporting children's discussions on school as they share their experiences (and some of their concerns, for example, "I'm nervous, I won't know who to play with."), we give children the opportunity to process their feelings and work through ways to manage new situations with peers, some of whom may share the same feelings. Children have also shared enthusiasm and excitement about this coming transition. We planned some visits to local schools so the children would have the opportunity to visit and explore the grounds of a school with their friends.

We are also looking forward to lunch box week which will be held in December. During this week, children will pack and bring their own lunch boxes, just as they would if attending school, to help them become familiar with managing little containers of food.



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Children have also been exploring treasure maps, and following maps designed by educators to find hidden treasure, as well as creating their own treasure maps and burying their own treasure that they then delight in tracking and finding with their peers.



Some children have been exploring an interest in dragons and discussing the many types of dragons that exist; both mystical dragons from storybooks as well as actual dragons such as the komodo and bearded dragons. This has led to the making of a variety dragon lairs from clay and other natural items. Children have dramatised their own story lines and have role-played being dragons themselves' leaping through the yard and hiding in bushes. Seeing pictures of dragon eggs with baby dragons inside have led the children to make nests and create dragon families – with some children drawing eggs and cutting these out to further



resource their play. Many questions have been asked whilst reading books and looking at pictures of dragons, including: Why do they breathe fire? Are dragons real? Do they have baby dragons? The children looked at pictures and discussed the features of dragons, what they eat, whether they sleep, where they live et cetera. Children seem especially interested in the beautiful, vibrant colours of different types of dragons.

One group of children has been exploring wombats, leading to reading books on wombats and especially enjoying a definite favourite, "Wombat Stew." Children have therefore spent a lot of time making wombat stew with mud in our new our humpy and campsite area.

