A WORD FROM ELLON ...

Thinking About Clothing

More and more in our modern world adults are being challenged to make informed choices. As parents, it is no exception. A specific area I would like to discuss (and I am very open to dialogue about, so please come and share your thoughts) is clothing.

The human being is born without physical protection – they begin their life dependent on the caring concern of others. The human being is a creature of warmth. The body continuously balances heat and cold. The body maintains a definite temperature in spite of the variation of temperature in its surroundings. At each stage of life the human being has to re-establish specifically human warmth if they are to be a happy and healthy person. It is this balance that the human being needs to be active in the world. The sense of balance is one of the foundation senses that is acquired gradually during the first seven years. It is most important for parents and educators to establish and refine the warmth organism of the growing child.

Continued page 2 ...

Retreating from the cold, we draw ever more inwards, seeking a warm hearth. It can be a surprise to find that the most sustaining warmth comes from the inner ‘fire’ that seems to burn more brightly during this time of year.

... We may find our mind ablaze with new ideas, for winter clears the head too, allowing thoughts to rise in clarity, like stars in a frost-polished sky.

Excerpt from ‘All Year Round’
A WORD FROM ELLON CONTINUED ...

Two points to consider when dressing your child for these winter days are:

✦ Layers of clothing.

✦ Undergarments: singlet and tights. We often see children running around with bare backs and tummies. The region of the liver and kidneys needs warmth.

For more practical support and a deeper understanding of decisions around clothing for your child I refer you the article written by my colleague while I was teaching in Samford, which is included in this newsletter on page 9.

Another area of clothing and choice today is what fabrics we choose to put on our children. Are they wearing natural fibres or synthetic fabrics?

Again we need to consider the developing human being. The skin is an organ, the outer boundary of the body. It continuously has a relationship with the body and the surroundings. It needs to be able to breathe and it is the organ that constantly experiences the sense of touch. Touch is also a foundation sense that is important to the first seven years. This may support you in considering why it would be beneficial to choose natural organic fibres rather than synthetics where possible.

Lastly, it is worth considering the colour of the child’s clothing. Does it play a part in the child’s development and what is appropriate for certain ages? I put forward the following questions that maybe you can research and reflect on. We could discuss our findings at a Parent Curriculum Night.

✦ Do our character and instincts find expression in choice of clothing?

✦ Can colour influence or reflect our moods?

✦ Is your child more harmonious in certain colours?

✦ Is there any difference when your child is dressed in plain colours to when they wear patterns and characterised clothing?

I look forward to seeing you all at the Winter Spiral on Wednesday and the following Wednesday at Clarke’s beach for supper and the lantern walk. We have all been very busy preparing and learning our winter songs. Please come and join us in the afternoons for singing around 3.05pm before pick up.

Cheers,

Ellon

Organic Shop

Little Earth: An expression of childhood
By Vicki Kearney, Illustrated by Jan Lillie

This little book is a lovely jewel. Like a gentle waking dream, it is an expression of the spirit of early childhood. Illustrated with hand-drawn pastel images which follow the flow of an outdoor playgroup near Brisbane, Little Earth has been created to touch the feeling life, allowing it to be read from the heart rather than the head. Suitable for parents and carers of young children. Available at Nature’s Child.
ON NOTICEBOARD

Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Regional Meeting at Periwinkle

On Saturday, September 4 Periwinkle is hosting the regional meeting of the Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Education (North Coast chapter). Periwinkle will be providing morning, lunch and afternoon tea to the meeting participants. We would very much like any willing parents to provide donations of cakes, biscuits or any other morning/afternoon tea items. If you are interested in making something for the meeting, please speak to Ellon.

Parents are also invited to attend the meeting. The cost is $50, including refreshments, and the topic is “Building Children's Life Sense while we discover the Elementals and Hierarchies”, guided by Sandra Frain for a “romp in the Kingdoms of Nature with Story, Song, Everyday Ceremony and Biodynamic activity!”. For bookings or enquiries contact Amber Greene at amber.greene@hotmail.com or on 07 5533 8915. Places are limited.

Cape Byron Spring Fair – Stall Coordinator needed

On Saturday, September 18 Cape Byron Rudolf Steiner School will be holding their annual Spring Fair. Every year Periwinkle holds its own craft activity stall, where children and their parents can create a beautiful silk ribbon stick with watercolour paints. It is a wonderful opportunity for Periwinkle to join the larger Cape Byron community for the day. For Periwinkle to be able to hold its stall this year, I am calling on a parent or parents to please volunteer to be the Spring Fair Stall Coordinator(s). This role would involve coordinating the set up and pack down of the stall, ensuring there are enough ribbon and paint supplies (I believe there are plenty of supplies left over from last year) and organising the parent roster, as you will be allocating a time to all parents to man the stall throughout the day. If you have been looking for a way to help Periwinkle this year – this is it! It would be an ideal job for two parents working together. Periwinkle will not be able to have a stall at this year’s fair if I cannot find a coordinator, so, please, put your hand up! Please contact me on 0419 619 524 or Rebecca@mussettagedcare.com.au to volunteer. Many thanks in advance. Bec

Above: Periwinkle’s silk painting stall at last year’s Cape Byron Spring Fair

Living Tree Gardening and Maintenance Services

Does your garden need a makeover or just regular maintenance? Don’t know which plants would suit your garden? Need help and advice on native regeneration? Can’t keep up with your veggie patch, or don’t have time to start one?

I can help manage your garden and make it look as beautiful as it can be, whether it be mowing, weeding, planting, pruning, design or landscaping. Call me for a free quote.

Kasper Hagen Ph: 0403 862 322
Update from Saints of Hope

Saints of Hope Kindergarten in Kawangware, Nairobi, Kenya, is Periwinkle’s sister school. Susan Perrow sent this report after her visit last month.

Last Tuesday afternoon, as I was doing some mentoring in a school in the central part of Nairobi, I hired a taxi to travel into Kawangware to visit Emilly at SOH and see the new fenced playground and also see how the food program was going.

I was pleased to meet Francis, the new cook and cleaner who has been hired as part of the food program budget. He proudly showed me the large pots and new stove, and told me what he had cooked for lunch that day (meat and veges and rice). I was pleased that Emilly wisely decided to employ a strong young man and I think he will be a great addition to the SOH team.

As I was there at the end of the day’s program I was able to meet many of the parents and carers as they came to pick up their children – they all wanted to shake my hand and say thank you (which I now pass onto you all in Australia and Canada!)

John and I hope to visit again when the children are eating, and get photos of them all at lunch. The new fence looks bright and colourful (see photo!) and is doing a good job to secure all the playground equipment. There were bags of sand waiting ready to refill the sand pit - now the fence is finished the sand can be put back and there should be no worries about it being stolen again! And of course, Francis can help lift heavy sand bags and help the two female teachers with such 'muscle' tasks.

It is a pity that the play area is now reduced to being inside this fence, but the landlord has decided to use up the grassy area outside for building more rentable buildings.

It was very muddy inside the playground – in fact there was mud everywhere, but fortunately the heavy rains are due to finish soon.

I think our next fundraiser idea that I will add to the SOH website should be money for a covered and paved verandah outside the door to the two classrooms. This way 50 shoes and bags can stay outside and not having to be kept in the small classroom area. It would also be of great use for fine weather as an outdoor eating and craft/art area.

We are getting quotes at the moment for this. It could be built as a mobile structure and taken away, along with the playground and fence, if a move happens in the future. Emilly sends warm greetings to you all.

Cheers from Kenya,
Susan
A Brief Reflection on Periwinkle

I would like to take this chance to reflect on my time so far at Periwinkle. In the role of student early childhood teacher I have visited Periwinkle weekly since March. As I write I am just completing my second full week at Periwinkle. I have been an early childhood worker for the last five years at a community preschool, hold a Diploma in Children’s Services and am a mother of two. It is from this background that I come to these reflections on Periwinkle.

One of the things that I have always found encouraging about Steiner education is the emphasis Steiner had on the continuing personal development of the teacher.

... it is what you are that matters; if you are good this goodness will appear in your gestures, and if you are evil or bad-tempered this will also appear in your gestures – in short, everything that you do yourself passes over into the child and pursues its way within him.
(Steiner, 1982, p.35)

As teachers of the young child, one must be 'worthy of imitation'. Ellon embodies this quality beautifully as is clear from her honesty, self-reflection and the consciousness she brings to her program. As someone working towards becoming an Early Childhood Steiner teacher, I have found Ellon’s passionate and spontaneous speeches nourishing and inspiring! Ellon guides her staff with warmth and works closely with them in a collaborative manner. She brings such integrity to her work it encourages her coworkers, and myself as her student, to aspire to keep growing and learning, both personally and professionally. The soothing singing, bread making, watercolours and handmade toys are only part of a much larger living philosophy. Having the privilege of seeing 'behind the scenes' of Periwinkle, I am heartened to see staff who bring such spirit and dedication to their profession. I have experienced the culture of this workplace to be open, honest and supportive, which flows on to create an environment where each child is received with genuine warmth, love and respect.

My experience of working in a mainstream preschool informs my perspective on the quality of play that happens at Periwinkle. I have found the children here to settle quite deeply into their play with little support. They are capable and creative children, who set about their ‘work’ with a resourcefulness that I find refreshing. Golden leaves are fish, bark rolled up with a mix of sand and mud is sushi, a large shell is the phone. There have been moments in the day when the whole room is called to a puppet show put on by five-year-olds that captivates teachers and children alike. I have seen the children expressing pure joy at the simple flags that we made as they flapped in the breeze. The children at Periwinkle are, without-a-doubt, the North Coast’s best mudpie makers (with an extra special mention to Alysia and Esther) and amazing tree climbers!

Thank you to the beautiful children, families, Kellie, Andrea, Bess, Elizabeth and especially Ellon for welcoming me into your centre with such openness. I enter into the second half of my prac feeling inspired and confident of the riches and benefits that education from a Steiner perspective can bring. With absolute confidence I am able to say to all families that your children are truly blessed to be able to experience the rich program at Periwinkle.

Xiola Nolan

CRAFT SUPPLIERS

Tanja has provided the following list of suppliers for your own craft endeavours.

The Craft Circle
Workshop and Showroom: 52 Williamstown Rd, Kingsville, VIC
Website: http://thecraftcircle.com.au/
E-mail: thecraftcircle@optusnet.com.au
Phone: 0425 702 001
✦ Felt, fleece for felting and stuffing.
✦ Will mail anywhere in Australia, about 1 week turnaround.

Winterwood
Shop: Shop 5, 1-15 Hopetoun Road, Park Orchards, VIC 3114
Phone: 03 9879 0426
Facsimile: 03 9879 0427
Website: www.winterwoodtoys.com.au
Email: sales@winterwoodtoys.com.au
✦ Felt, fleece for felting and stuffing, muslins, silks, dyes, toys, wool and more.
✦ Check the website.
✦ Will mail anywhere in Australia, about 1 week turnaround.

Nature’s Child
Shop: Industrial Estate, Byron Bay
Phone: (02) 6685 5780
✦ Felt pieces as well as ready made toys.

The Silver Thread
Shop: 61 Burringbar St, Mullumbimby
Phone: (02) 6684 2727
✦ Felt, hand dyed fleece, wool.
✦ Great source if you need it in a hurry.

Lincraft (just opened)
92 Tamar St, Ballina
Phone: (02) 6681 1320
✦ I haven’t been there yet but it will be good for threads, scissors, fabric, etc.

CRAFT NIGHTS

Fortnightly during term, Monday 7pm-8.30pm

Have you ever admired the hand-made craft on the seasonal display or known of the benefits of making toys for your children but not had the time, materials or skills to do it?

The Periwinkle craft group is a wonderful way to enrich your own Periwinkle experience (as a parent or staff member) and to gain some of the skills to create the beautiful hand-made toys you may have seen around the playroom. Craft evenings are held fortnightly during term on Monday evenings from 7pm-8.30pm. A $5 materials fee covers everything you need and everything you make goes home with you. The evenings are coordinated by Tanja, who brings her wealth of talent, Steiner awareness, and wonderful patience for those of us who are new to craft! Enjoy the company of other parents, a cosy environment and a cup of tea as you create something special for your child.

Above: At the last craft evening we created babies in matchbox beds: matchboxes decorated with felt and lined with silk; babies made from a bead glued to some pipecleaner with hand-sewn felt hats and swaddled in felt, complete with a silk blanket. Even with my own limited craft skills, under Tanja’s guidance I was delighted to have made this matchbox baby to take home to Esther. Esther has been having trouble sleeping, saying she’s been having bad dreams – so we renamed her toy the ‘Dream Baby’ and she now keeps it beside her bed to help her have good dreams. Jenny
I enrolled my three-year-old son at Periwinkle because of its excellent reputation and because I intuitively knew it was the right environment for him. My feeling has proved to be right and the May Curriculum Night was one more example of this.

With a cup of tea in hand, perched on the tiny chairs, we sat in a circle and I had the clear sense that I was in my son’s world, one that I know little about, despite being aware of nearly every other detail of his life. There were about ten parents, with Ellon and Andrea leading the discussion. The topic was 'story telling' and within ten minutes, to my surprise, I was captivated.

Ellon told us (rather than read) a fairy tale. She used the same intriguing tone I’m sure she uses with the children, embellished the story with detail and wonder, made eye contact with each of us, and carried us along with her on the tale. When the story was over we discussed our experience. We all seemed to have felt that we’d been on a journey, our imaginations and senses had been activated, and our feeling of unity and wonder increased as the story went on. We also felt appreciation for the story teller and the detailed account she gave which brought a familiar story to life, for and with us.

Then, however, we were subjected to a DVD of the same story as interpreted and animated by Disney. Again, during the discussion there was a consensus. This time though, our experience of the story left us feeling blank, brain dead, patronised, irritated, and controlled by the stereotypical images, the artificial colours, dramatic music, and the lack of room for a personalised experience. There was no sense of having shared a journey.

The point made was that, as adults, we have a bank of experiences to draw on and can choose to accept or reject Disney's animated version of the tale. Children, however, have no such no bank from which to draw, and will automatically accept the version they are given access to as 'the' story.

My use of the television and the computer as entertainment for Gabriele had crept into our daily routine. I justified it by the fact that he was watching 'children's programs', seemingly harmless and often educational.

I knew the theories and had heard the results of studies about children and television but because I directly experienced the difference between imagination enhancing and imagination deadening I left the evening deeply motivated to protect my little one's mind and offer him the much deserved environment, scope, space, and opportunity to grow, play, imagine and create.

Having drastically curtailed screen time, Gabriele is less mesmerised, less interested, and more easily drawn away. He plays happily by himself and more often creates his own games rather than demanding to be entertained.

I usually only see other Periwinkle parents at drop off and pick up times, neither of which is optimal for discussion or building friendships! The Curriculum Night allowed time to exchange views and generally become a little more familiar with each other. I left feeling warmer, and much more a part of the school.

Catherine Stokoe

Parent Curriculum Nights are held on the fourth Wednesday of each term, as shown in the Calendar.

FOOD ALLERGY & INTOLERANCE TESTING

Does your child suffer from:
- glue ear
- recurrent tonsillitis
- asthma
- eczema
- dermatitis
- or a frequently sore tummy?
- Do they have dark circles or puffiness under the eyes or experience mood swings or erratic behaviour after eating?

If so, they may have food allergies or intolerances.

Kirsten has over 10 years experience specialising in allergies and children’s behavioural problems. She uses the non-invasive VEGA test device to determine food, chemical and environmental allergens.

Health fund rebates available on all consultations.

Ph: 0416 196 980
www.naturopathicherbalist.com.au
Kneading And Jar-Rating
On A Winter’s Night

A group gathered at Periwinkle on a winter’s night last week to celebrate what I’d call ‘the life of bread’ with Sandra Frain. It was a great evening for the senses. We started by tantalising the tastebuds with lots of organic goodness: a warm pumpkin and apple soup; spritely colourful salad; and the pièce de résistance, sourdough breads with fragrant healthy butters.

We listened to the cyclical sounds of the stone grinding flour mill, experienced the textures of different flours and learnt of the body and soul benefits of old-fashioned sour leavening (through natural fermentation) as the base for sourdough breads.

We watched Sandra make sourdough starter and an exceptionally easy wet loaf (a no kneading bread!) amongst the wafting scents of ‘leavening’. We also got the opportunity to flour up and knead some sourdough with beautiful fragrant fresh herbs or spicy dried fruits.

And then there was the jar-rating. We made silky butter from unhomogenised, unpasturised cream in a jar whilst listening to Sandra sing an African melody.

Alysia enjoyed a warm sourdough bread roll for breakfast the next day. We also took home some sourdough starter, recipes and great info.

Adriana Anderson
photos taken by Kellie

Following the workshop, the sourdough technique is now used at Periwinkle when the children make bread.
Children and Winter Weather

An article written by Linda Justo, a colleague of Ellon's at Samford Valley Steiner School. Thank you to Linda for allowing us to reproduce it.

Last year I was fortunate enough to attend Lisa Romero’s “Towards Health and Healing” workshops. One of the workshops was on the 12 senses and it helped me to understand a little better why, for me as a parent at least, I have two children who seem to “feel” the cold differently (as well as why they have such divergent tastes in food, their physical strength differences, etc). Why is it that one child almost always dresses warmly as the weather cools and other persists in wearing shorts and t-shirt for as long as possible? (Do these questions sound familiar?) So the following is a small portion of what was covered in that workshop which may be helpful:

Children need to be thought of as ONIONS! They need LOTS of LAYERS in our beautiful climate. It is cold here in the mornings, not just in the Samford area but especially in most of our classrooms!

Our twelve senses, from touch through to ego, in general terms, develop or come into their own in an age appropriate sequence. So for example, the sense of touch, the first of the four foundation senses, doesn’t fully develop until about the age of 2½ (when the child is finally able to touch around to her back and thus first says “I”). And so it goes, through each sense: life sense at about 4, movement at 5-6, balance at 7 … with the sense of warmth not being fully developed until, wait for it, around the age of 14 (yes, fourteen). Until a child is at least 14, they should not be left unaided to make choices in how warmly they dress! Often when the child says they don’t want to wear a cardigan/singlet/long pants/long-sleeved top they are saying it from their sense of life. That is, they may not like the “feel” on their skin or the sensation of something around their neck.

Have you ever noticed that some children, once rugged up, don’t take the layers off as the day warms up? This is because, just as with not feeling the cold, until the age of 14 children do not have the capacity to determine how warm they feel. As the ego for the child it is adults’ responsibility to help the child dress appropriately.

The consequences for children for not keeping those vital metabolic processes warm may be very significant in later life. Our liver, for example, runs at about 42 degrees (given all the work it does it needs that heat) – it is not advisable to take energy away from its activity (or any other organ’s) through it trying to generate enough warmth for the body to function effectively. Think of the number of t-shirts that don’t adequately cover the mid-rift region and the impact for all those vital organs (liver, kidneys) left exposed to the cool air. For the child under 7 it is vital they are kept warm – this is when they are working with the development of their organs.

Each child is different and depending on their constitution will feel the cold/warmth differently. The metabolic child runs warmer than the cooler nerve sense child. All children need layers but some will need more than others. (And as an aside, it is great if they are labeled too!!)

“But” I hear you say “he/she doesn’t feel the cold”. That doesn’t mean they have an advanced sense of warmth. What it means is that they are probably hypo-sensitive in their sense of warmth (as opposed to being hyper-sensitive). Children who behave as if they don’t feel the cold have probably never experienced being truly warm. Please keep these beautiful, precious children warm – what we do as adults impacts on their health when they are adults, even if there appears to be no apparent consequence at the time!

Linda Justo
Above: Susan Perrow and her friend Silviah Njagi spending a morning boiling up dyes and putting colour into many metres of cotton, muslin and silk fabric for Periwinkle’s sister school, Saints of Hope Kindergarten.
Periwinkle 2010 Calendar

as at June 21, 2010

Term 2
Monday, April 19 – Friday, July 2

Monday, April 26: ANZAC Day Public Holiday.
Thursday, May 6: Parent Management Committee Meeting. All welcome. 7pm.
Wednesday, May 12: **Parent Curriculum Night.** 7pm-8.30pm.
Thursday, June 3: Parent Management Committee Meeting. All welcome. 7pm.
Wednesday, June 9: **Sourdough Workshop**, 6.30m-9pm, $15.
Wednesday, June 23: **Winter Spiral Walk**, 4.45pm for 5pm. Preschool finishes at 12.30pm to allow preparation time.
Monday, June 28: **Craft Night**, 7pm-8.30pm. Please bring $5 for materials.
Wednesday, June 30: **Lantern walk**. Normal school day. Meet at 4.45pm for early supper and lantern walk at the beach.

Term 3
Monday, July 19 – Friday, September 24

Monday, August 2: Parent Management Committee Meeting. All welcome. 5.30pm.
Wednesday, August 11: **Parent Curriculum Night.** 7pm-8.30pm.
Monday, August 30: Parent Management Committee Meeting. All welcome. 5.30pm.
Saturday, September 18: Cape Byron Spring Fair. Periwinkle silk painting stall.
Wednesday, September 22: **Spring Festival**. Half day.

Term 4
Monday, October 11 – Thursday, December 16

Monday, October 11: Parent Management Committee Meeting. All welcome. 5.30pm.
Wednesday, November 3: **Parent Curriculum Night**. 7pm-8.30pm.
Monday, November 8: Parent Management Committee Meeting. All welcome. 5.30pm.
Monday, December 6: Parent Management Committee Meeting. All welcome. 5.30pm.
Tuesday, December 12 & Thursday, December 16: **End-of-year Break-Up.** Half day.
Friday, December 17: Pupil free day for end-of-year clean up.

This calendar is updated throughout the year and re-issued with each newsletter. Please replace your old version.