

NEWSLETTER: March 2010



BONDI BEACH PLAYGROUPS

RECIPES - Lemon Easter bread



Traditional scones are often made with cream. If you use buttermilk, they become lighter and fluffier.

2 cups of flour
1 tbsp of baking powder
½ tsp of salt

¼ cup of brown sugar
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
3 tbsp of unsalted butter, cut
into small pieces

1 egg yolk
1 cup of buttermilk

for the glaze:
1 cup of icing sugar
juice of ½ lemon

Sift flour and combine with sugar, salt, baking powder and lemon zest. Rub butter in with your fingertips until crumbly. Add yolk and buttermilk and combine. On a flour-dusted surface knead into a ball and flatten to about 2 cm thick. Cut into 8 wedges, transfer onto tray (make sure you leave space between the wedges) and bake for about 16-18 minutes until lightly brown. Blend icing sugar and lemon juice and drizzle onto scones when cool.

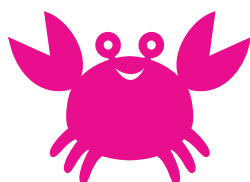
For people like me from the Northern Hemisphere celebrating Easter in autumn feels weird. Luckily Australians love keeping European traditions alive, so in this Newsletter you'll find Easter craft and food ideas that will make you forget about the rainy season to come.

By the way, have you visited KidSpace at the Australian Museum yet? It's perfect for those grey wintry days. You'll find the review on page 4, as well as some insight into why playgroup regular Simon Miller always carries a pump in his pram.

Whenever Simon's daughter Lila meets my son Leo, I morph into a language robot: "Careful, Leo!" – "Vorsicht, Leo!" and "No" – "Nein". I translate literally everything I say from English into German. And I am not the only one: thanks to Bondi's cultural diversity there are now mums in almost every session raising their kids bi- or trilingually. Turn to page 2 to read how challenging it can be.

Have a fantastic Easter holiday!

Vera Sprothen



CRAFT- Eggs in frocks



Dress up your eggs by wrapping ribbons, lace and colourful string (use glue or tape to attach) around an egg-shaped piece of cardboard.

What did you just say ?



The challenge of growing up with two languages

When Tanya Holm is at playgroup with her son Alec she always has to tell him everything twice. Not because Alec has trouble understanding his Mum – quite the opposite – at three years of age the little boy already understands more than others because South-African born Tanya raises him bilingually. But this means that whenever she speaks to him in her mother tongue, Afrikaans, she needs to repeat it again in



South African born Tanya Holm with son Alec (3 years) who grows up with Afrikaans and English

English. Tanya says it is hard work, but she doesn't mind:

"To me it's normal now. I don't think about it anymore."

Tanya's son Alec is one of a large number of children at our playgroup who grow up speaking and understanding more than one language. An enormous 42% of all residents in Bondi Beach and almost 28% of all residents in North Bondi use a language other than English at home, according to the 2006 Census. Many speak Russian or Spanish, French or German and most of them are eager to pass their native language on to their children.

But what sounds like a wonderful idea in theory often turns out to be a challenge in practice. Playgroup committee member Jette Dessaulles still remembers the linguistic hotchpotch her 4 ½ -year-old daughter Mila used when she was younger:



Jette Dessaulles with her two daughters Mila (4) and Lilla (8 months)

"She would start a sentence in English and finish it in German. It was crazy."

Experts, however, encourage parents like Jette to continue speaking two languages to their kids. They say that bilingually raised children often go through a phase of mixing up words but will mostly sort it out by the time they turn five.

Despite common misconceptions about the effects of bilingualism, research shows that multilingual children have a clear cognitive advantage over their monolingual peers. For example, a recent study by York University (Canada) found that bilingual children perform better when it comes to abstract thinking, planning and focusing and researchers at the University of Würzburg (Germany) found that newborns are able to distinguish between different languages.

However, bilingualism works best when a child can clearly associate one place or one person with one language. Jette solved the problem by speaking only German at home and only English at playgroup.

Being consistent also paid off for playgroup member Sabina Escobar. Born in Colombia and married to a Frenchman, she raises her children Lola (3) and 13-month-old twins Oliver and Malia trilingually. Her daughter Lola loves singing songs in French, although she prefers not to speak the language of her Dad. Yet, she is now perfectly switching back and forth between Spanish and English.



Sabina Escobar with twin daughter Malia (13 months) who grows up with English, Spanish and French

Children like Lola who are able to speak two languages equally well are rare. Most bilingual people understand two languages, but will develop a preference for one. Those kids might end up speaking English to their Mum, even though she only ever spoke Spanish to them.



Coordinator's report

A very belated Happy New Year! Here's hoping you all had a fantastic silly season. We certainly kicked it off



with a bang at the Playgroup Christmas Party in December last year. The many of you who came will know what a fabulous time was had by all; the kids (and dads in particular) loved

the drumming and Santa made sure that each little guest went home with a special present. My hat goes off to the wonderful Sarah-Jane Kurtini for doing such an amazing job

of organising the party (in the throes of morning sickness no less!). Thanks also go out to everyone who helped chop fruit, cook sausages and cut



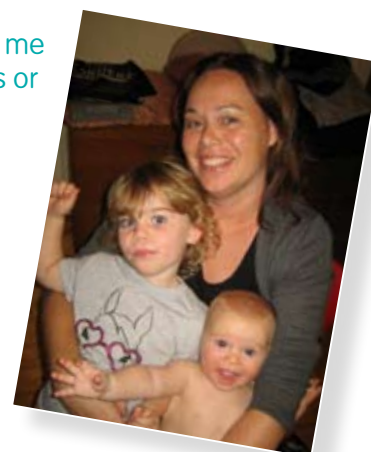
cake on the day. I think the success of the party can be measured by the participation of our members and many of you put a lot of love and care into making it such a great day for your kids.

Which brings me onto my next subject: our Playgroup is only as robust as the efforts of our members. We are all responsible for making sure the space is tidy and clean. Each and every member is required to do their bit to help out, whether it be washing the dishes, putting toys away or doing a scan of the toyroom to make sure things are put away properly. We've all got kids, we're all busy people, so there's really no excuse not to pitch in. Just think what a fantastic role model you'll be – you never know, your kids might start putting their toys away at home if they see you doing it at playgroup!

You'll receive your membership renewal notice direct from Playgroup NSW this year. Once you renew directly with the Association you need to pay your annual session fees for Bondi Beach Playgroups. Your Session Leader can give you a copy of our 2010 Fees sheet which outlines how to do this.

Please feel free to contact me with any ideas, comments or suggestions.

Stephanie Sparke
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MEET THE SESSION LEADER

Carolyn Pasvolsky, Thursday 1



Caro is one of our most active playgroup members. Besides running the Thursday morning session, Caro purchases our daily necessities like toilet paper, dishwashing liquid and paper towels and gets involved in committee meetings. And on top of all that she has two children: Marlena, 2, and Sylvie, 6 months.

You could attend playgroup sessions and leave again like so many others do. Why don't you?

Growing up in a small town in the "wheat belt country" out of Perth you see that things don't happen unless people get involved. I also believe that it is incredibly important to have an affordable and safe play environment for our children. We outsource so much of our children's social activity, so for me it is nice to know that there is still a space where parents set the state of play.

What do your kids like best at playgroup?

The food!!! The parents in my group provide excellent play lunches – they have taken the term 'yummy mummy' to a whole new level!



Dad's Day Out

Simon Miller and Lila, 20 months
Session: Friday 1

When we go out: Lila has recently started at family day care for two days a week, but apart from that she's with me every other day.

Where we go to have a blast: The local library. Lila loves finding any material containing "The Wiggles" or "Maisy".

What I always have in the pram: We had a flat tyre once, and didn't have a pump. It required some extra muscle to push. There's always a pump in the pram now.

My emergency snack: Nuts.

My rescue remedy to master even the biggest chaos: The Wiggles.

Since having Lila my life has changed because: She has made me lose a few kilos by lugging her up and down the stairs of our unit. I have also become an expert at doing everything with one arm. There are not too many dads that get the chance to spend as much time with their daughter as I have. I consider myself very privileged to be in such a position.



REVIEW By Vera Sprothen

KidSpace at the Australian Museum

Level 2, 6 College Street, Sydney

If I had the chance of a total career makeover, I would find myself a job learning about the wonders of nature. I love discovering what holds the universe together, why there are waves in the ocean or what makes sea turtles hatch at full moon. So whenever I get the chance I visit nature museums. Forget the "Do not touch" signs – these days it's all about pulling handles, pushing buttons and getting up close and personal with the world's weird and wonderful creatures. Take the Australian Museum, for example, its KidSpace on Level 2 is a haven for children (and people like me) and a perfect refuge for rainy autumn days.

What is there to see?

In short, KidSpace is like a giant touchy-feely-book: there are stuffed koalas, reptile skins, starfish and stones, fossils and bones, drawers displaying creepy spiders, plus plenty of picture books. Little cubby houses contain soft and wooden toys. There is a fenced play area for babies and a very well-looked-after change table. Staff regularly rearrange toys and activities so there's always something new to discover.

For \$12 per adult (kids under 5 are free) it really is great value for money.

Images: Vera Sprothen (1), Australian Museum (2+3)

