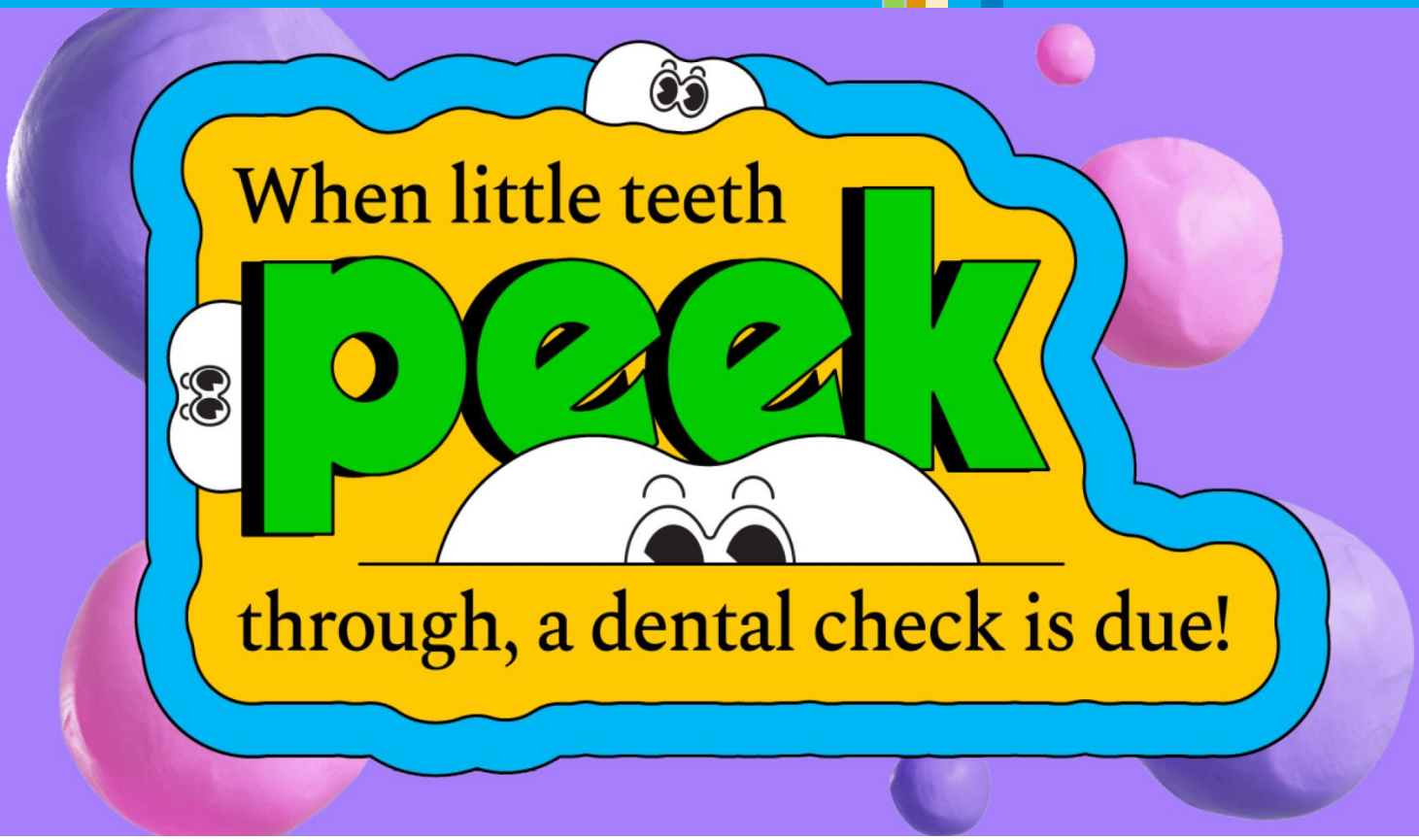
"Wherever you go, no matter what the weather, always bring your own sunshine" by Anthony J. D'Angelo

GEMS PREPSCHOOL



ON this MONTH

SMILING STARTS SCHEDULE – A FREE DENTAL CHECK UP

October 6 : 8:00-10:30 am
October 8 : 2:30 – 4:30 pm

Cape Care ----------10
Mountain Bike Mondays ----------5
Gems Amazing Race ----------6
Beach Day ----------7
Glow Stick Day /Movie Day ----------8
Art Attack ----------9

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Loud Shirt Day ---------- 16
National Nutrition Week ---------- 12-18
Aussie Bird Count ---------- 19 – 25
Grandparents Day ---------- 25
Children's Week ---------- 24-1 Nov

A FRESH SEASON AT GEMS!

Spring is well and truly underway at GEMS, and there's plenty happening around the centre! Our School holiday program is in full swing, our new educators are settling beautifully into the team, and the children have been enjoying lots of fun, hands-on experience as we welcome the warmer weather. We're looking forward to another busy and spooky month ahead!

Community Events



AUSSIE BIRD COUNT – OCTOBER 19-25

Birds live alongside us and they can tell us a lot about the health of our environment. With one in six Australian birds facing the threat of extinction, every observation can help. For this Aussie Bird Count Week, use the free Aussie Bird Count app to **register** and record the birds you see from a single spot. Each count adds to a nationwide database.

CHILDREN'S WEEK – OCTOBER 24 – NOVEMBER 1

Children's Week is a national celebration of children, their rights, achievements and contributions to our communities. It's a time to recognise every child's right to enjoy childhood, be heard, feel valued and have opportunities to learn, play and thrive. Children's Week provides a wonderful opportunity for families and communities to celebrate the many cultures, languages and traditions that make Australia unique. Share stories and songs in different languages, explore cultural traditions, create art, enjoy music and food, or encourage children to share what makes their family and culture special.

Find out more here.

Kids in the kitchen

CHICKEN MEATBALLS WITH PESTO

COOK 30 min | SERVES 8



INGREDIENTS

1 kg **chicken mince**
1 cup **fresh breadcrumbs,** *soaked in a 1/4 cup milk*
2 **eggs**
1 cup **parmesan cheese**, *grated*
1 tablespoon **garlic**, *minced*
sea salt and **pepper**, *to season*
Basil Pistachio Pesto:
2 cups **fresh basil leaves**
1 cup **baby spinach leaves**
2 **garlic** cloves
1/2 cup **pistachios**
1/2 cup **parmesan**, *grated*
zest and juice of 1 **lemon**
3/4 cup **extra virgin olive oil**
500 g **spaghetti,** *cooked according to packet instructions reserving 1 cup of cooking water*

Method:

To make the Chicken Meatballs: Place the mince, breadcrumbs, eggs, parmesan, garlic, salt and pepper into a large bowl and **mix** thoroughly to combine. **Take** 2 heaped tablespoons of mince and roll into rounds. **Heat** a little olive oil in a fry pan over medium-high heat. **Add** meatballs and cook 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally or until the meatballs are golden and cooked through. **Set aside.**

To make the Basil Pistachio Pesto: Place the basil, baby spinach, garlic, pistachios, parmesan, lemon juice and zest into the bowl of a food processor. **Blitz** for 1-2 minutes or until finely chopped. **With the motor running,** slowly add the olive oil and continue blitzing until thoroughly combined (scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary).

To Serve: Pour the pesto over the cooked spaghetti with a splash of the reserved pasta water and toss to combine. Top spaghetti with cooked meatballs, fresh basil leaves and a grating of parmesan cheese. **Enjoy x**

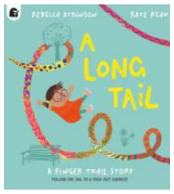
Book reviews

Sweet stories surrounded by inspiring illustrations for pre-schoolers.



Giant Parsnip Soup| Daniela Sosa

On a lovely sunny day, a group of friends discovers something very unusual . . . It's big. It's got leaves. It's in their way. What is it? A giant parsnip! In this adorable story a group of children use their imagination to turn a giant parsnip into a delicious dinner for them all to share. Each page has something to count and spot as the book introduces the numbers one to ten.



A Long Tail | Rebecca Atkinson

One curious child and one long, colourful tail invite you on a playful journey, using your finger to trace the tactile trail through every twist and turn. Children will delight in exploring **die-cut doors and windows**, weaving up and down until they reach a **spectacular gatefold reveal**. Designed to engage **children of all reading abilities**, *A Long Tail* combines lyrical text with vibrant illustrations and clever interactive features.



The Little Bird That Fell | Bradley Trevor Greive

A tender and uplifting picture book for children that retells the story of Penguin Bloom from the perspective of the rescued magpie chick herself. The true and inspiring story of Sam Bloom and Penguin has won many hearts all around the world. Now, in this moving and delightful picture book, we hear the story from the rescued magpie chick herself.

FOCUS ARTICLE: The stories that tell children who they are

Children are constantly gathering little pieces of information about who they are and where they belong. They hear it in the stories we tell about when they were babies. They see it in the foods we cook, the words our families use, the people whose photos sit around the house and the celebrations we make important. They notice which songs we sing, where grandparents grew up, the places we visit and the traditions we repeat year after year.

These everyday experiences are helping children build their sense of identity and belonging. This feels particularly important to think about during **Children's Week, held from 24 October to 1 November this year**. Children's Week is an annual celebration of children, their rights and their achievements. The 2026 theme is: **"Children have the right to use their own language, celebrate their culture and practise their religion."**

Based on Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the theme is a reminder that a child's language, family history, culture, beliefs and community are important parts of who they are. For children, a sense of identity develops gradually. It grows through relationships, experiences and the messages they receive about themselves and their family.

When children hear positive stories about where they come from, see their family and culture valued and have opportunities to participate in traditions that are meaningful to them, they learn that these parts of themselves matter. And those traditions don't need to be elaborate.

They might be Sunday breakfast at Grandma's house, making the same birthday cake every year, using a family nickname, speaking another language with relatives, going camping in the same place each summer or cooking a recipe that has been passed down through generations. Even the seemingly insignificant things can become part of a child's understanding of *"this is what our family does"* or *"this is where I belong."*

At home, supporting this doesn't have to mean organising a special activity for Children's Week. Often, it happens through very ordinary moments. Tell your child stories about your own childhood. What games did you play? What did your grandparents cook? What did you do after school? What family rules did you think were completely unfair at the time?

Cook something your family has made for years and talk about where it came from. Teach children words or expressions used by grandparents or other family members. Look through old photographs together and tell the stories behind them. Talk about why your family celebrates particular occasions, follows certain traditions or has created traditions of its own.

Children are often fascinated to discover that their parents and grandparents were once children too. It's also worth remembering that family stories don't only need to be about the past. Children are helping create their family's story right now.

Ask which traditions they love and what they would like to keep doing. Let them choose a meal for a celebration or invent a new birthday ritual. Ask them about the places where they feel most at home. Be curious about the things that matter to them and listen when they talk about who they are, what they like and where they feel they belong.

There's also value in talking about the fact that other families may do things differently. They might speak different languages, eat different foods, celebrate different occasions, practise different religions or have different family structures. When children grow up knowing that their own identity is valued, while also seeing curiosity and respect shown towards the identities of others, we help lay the foundations for inclusion and belonging.

Families are not static, and neither is identity. Children can belong to many cultures, communities and groups at once. New traditions can sit alongside old ones, and a child's understanding of themselves will continue to grow and change as they do.

This Children's Week, share a family story your child hasn't heard before and ask, **"What do you think is special about our family?"** Their answer may become part of the story they carry about who they are and where they belong.

Find more information about children's week via the QR code.

Letter Hunt

Choose one letter and go on a quick hunt around the house to find things that begin with that sound.
For example, if you choose B, you might find a ball, book, banana or bag. Say the word slowly together and emphasise the beginning sound: "B-b-ball." You can collect the items in a basket, point to them as you find them, or simply keep a tally of how many you spot. Keep it playful and don't worry if your child needs help. The aim is to notice sounds in words and build early letter-sound awareness through everyday objects.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Water safety starts before summer



As the weather warms up, water quickly becomes part of everyday family life again backyard pools, trips to the beach, sprinklers, water play, baths, paddling pools and longer afternoons outside.

Spring is a good time to refresh water safety habits before summer is in full swing. For young children, water doesn't need to be deep to be dangerous. Baths, portable pools, buckets, eskies, ponds and containers left outside after rain can all present a risk. Children can move quickly and quietly, which is why active supervision around water is so important.

Active supervision means being close enough to respond straight away. It's different from checking occasionally, watching from inside or assuming another adult is keeping an eye on things. This becomes especially important at barbecues, parties and family gatherings. When several adults are around, it can be surprisingly easy for everyone to think someone else is watching.

A simple handover such as "I'm watching the kids now" or "Can you take over while I go inside?" can help make supervision clear.

Spring is also a useful time to check the environment around your home. Make sure pool gates close and latch properly, move chairs, toys and other climbable items away from pool fencing, empty portable pools and buckets after use, and keep bathroom doors closed when they're not being used.

It can also help to think about less obvious water hazards. A garden pond, pet water container, rain-filled tub or uncovered spa can all attract a curious child.

Children can begin learning simple water safety messages too. Encourage them to wait for an adult before entering the water, ask permission before getting into a pool and understand that water play always happens with an adult nearby.

Swimming lessons and water confidence are valuable skills, but they do not replace close adult supervision.

Water safety is often about simple habits repeated every day. Taking a few minutes now to check your home and talk about who is supervising can help make warmer-weather water play safer for everyone.

Follow the QR code for more water safety tips to keep everyone safe this upcoming swim season.

Sustainability CORNER

From scraps to soil

Food scraps are one of those everyday things we don't always think much about. A banana peel goes in the bin, the end of a carrot gets tossed away and leftover fruit disappears after afternoon tea. But for children, those little scraps can become a surprisingly interesting way to explore sustainability at home.

Spring is a great time to start noticing what happens to food after we've finished with it. If you have a compost bin or worm farm, involve children in adding suitable scraps and checking what is happening inside. If you don't, you can still explore the idea together by collecting a few fruit and vegetable scraps in a clear container with some soil and dry leaves and watching how they change over time.

Children are naturally curious about things that rot, break down, change colour or disappear. A piece of apple that looks completely different a week later can spark conversations about where food comes from, what happens to our waste and how scraps can eventually become part of the soil again. It can also be a good opportunity to notice how much food your household throws away. Are there vegetables that are often left on plates? Fruit that goes soft before it is eaten? Could scraps be used differently, composted or offered to a worm farm instead?

Sustainability doesn't always need to start with a big project. Sometimes it begins with simply noticing what we throw away and wondering, together, whether it could have another use. **Learn more about composting here**

Get Crafty



Tape Resistant Spring Art

Create a bright piece of spring artwork using just paper, tape and paint.

Start with a sheet of thick paper or cardboard. Tear or cut strips of masking tape and stick them across the page in any pattern you like. Children might make straight lines, zigzags, shapes or simply place the tape wherever they choose.

Next, paint over the whole page. Use one colour or offer a few spring-inspired colours and let children mix, dab and brush them across the paper.

While the paint is still slightly damp, carefully peel away the tape to reveal the clean lines underneath. The best part is that there's no "right" way for the finished artwork to look. Every picture will be different depending on where the tape was placed and how the paint was applied.

You can also experiment with sponges, cotton buds or scrunched paper instead of paintbrushes to create different textures.

As you create, talk about the colours and patterns appearing on the page. Ask, "What do you think will be underneath the tape?" or "What does your picture remind you of?"

A simple process, a little surprise and lots of room for creativity.

As always, we thank you to all of our wonderful GEMS families for your continued support. We love sharing these special moments with you and are so grateful to have such a lovely community around us. If you've been enjoying your experience at GEMS, we'd really appreciate if you could take a moment to leave us a Google review. Your feedback means so much to our team and also helps other local families learn a little more about what makes GEMS such a special place.

Wishing everyone a beautiful spring and fun filled school holiday break!

5 Minute MOVES

Traffic Light Moves

Short simple activities to get some active minutes in the day.

Turn five minutes into a quick burst of movement with a simple game of Traffic Light Moves.

Choose one person to call out the colours while everyone else moves around the space.

Green means go, run, skip, hop or march.
Yellow means slow down, move in slow motion, tiptoe or take giant careful steps.
Red means freeze completely.

Once everyone knows the basics, add a few extra colours to make it more fun. **Blue** could mean touch the ground, **purple** could mean spin around once, and **orange** could mean do three star jumps.

Keep changing the calls quickly so children need to listen, react and move in different ways. For an extra challenge, let children take turns being the caller and inventing their own colour actions. It's a simple way to get bodies moving while also practising listening, coordination and quick thinking all in just five minutes.

Feedback is always welcome

GEMS PREPSCHOOL DUNSBOROUGH

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