

Bear Park from Home

Dear Parents of Bear Park,

Hopefully you have all had a wonderful Easter Weekend and I would like to warmly invite you to our eighth edition of Bear Park at Home.

Firstly though I would like to share with you a very special youtu.be video that Lisa our Centre Director from Bear Park Kohi shared with me called – [“Papatuanuku is Breathing”](#) it very very moving and makes you very proud to be here in New Zealand - so do take some time to sit down and watch this with your family.

Keep safe
Sue & the Bear Park Team

Learning with Leaves:

Autumn is such a beautiful time of the year because the transformation of the outdoor environment is so dramatic. It is a truly magical experience to observe the leaves as they elegantly fall from the trees and dance in the breeze, whilst morphing into an array of rich colours. Exploring the outdoor environment and observing this spectacular transformation unfold, opens up doors for great learning opportunities.

Having discussions with your child about the changes in the environment during this time will teach them about the change in seasons and support them to understand more about their world, whilst encouraging language development. Ministry of Education affirms that children experience an environment where they “develop working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical, and material worlds” (Ministry of Education, 2017).



At home invite your child to search the garden or local park and see what leaves they discover. Perhaps you could challenge them by asking to search for 10 yellow leaves, 5 green leaves and 1 brown leaf. Or you could ask what the biggest leaf might look like in comparison to the smallest leaf. At Bear Park children intellectually find a range of purposes for leaves that we collect together. From observing colours, patterns, to textures, movements and sounds, there is a lot we can learn from such a simple, yet diverse resource.

Questions you could pose when exploring leaves with your infant or toddler:

- What do the leaves sound like? (scrunch the leaves in your hands)
- How can we make the leaves move? (Throwing the leaves in the air, or using your mouth to blow them)
- What do the leaves feel like? (Run your hands over the surface of the leaves)

Questions you could pose when exploring the leaves with older children:

- What colours do you see?
- What patterns can you see?
- How many leaves have you collected?
- Can you sequence the leaves from big to small?
- What can you create with the leaves?
- Can the leaves speak to us? If so, what would they say?

Setting up a photo studio inside

It looks like we will have a few colder and rainy days ahead so I thought you might be interested in setting up a photo studio. Depending on the technical device, such as an iPad or iPhone you have available, the studio can easily be used for video or stop motion ideas later on.



The set up is very similar to the light atelier - all you need is a white sheet/wall or something that you can transform into a neutral background, a light source, an object of interest and a table. The idea is to set up a space where your child/ren can explore the various techniques of the camera source and experiment with aspects such as focus, composition and light.

As for the subject choose something that is simple but interesting that offers your child/ren many possibilities to discover.

Perhaps have a look around your home for an object of interest, a toy (perhaps a teddy bear), or maybe pick a flower from the garden. Invite you child/ren to carefully place this on the table so as to start the process of taking photos.

Encourage them to look at the object from different angles, from different distances, from different heights so as to discover more and more details about it.

Turn on the light and look at the way this can alter the appearance of the object - does it cast a shadow? Does it reflect or refract the light? etc... There are so many variables and different effects to discover and unpack.

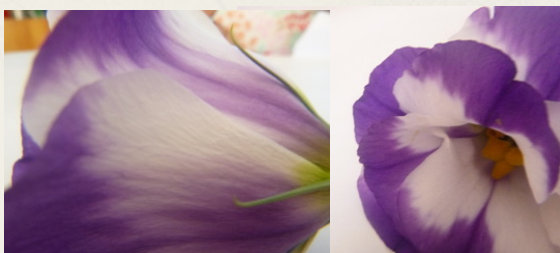
Again have a look at the photos and reflect upon them with your young photographer -

“Which photo do you find most interesting and why?” “What do you notice about it?”

“How does this photo make you feel?”

“What does it look like when the light is on?” “And when it is off?” “How did it change?”

Listen carefully to what ideas or interests emerge through your conversations with them and invite them further to explore the same object but with different backgrounds e.g. different colours or different textures. Explore how this will affect the object and perhaps change the appearance and mood of it.



The Art of Telling a Story

It has been a two weeks or so since our nation entered lock down, and in that time I'm sure many of you have endured reading a favourite book many times. You probably know it off by heart and you might have even tried to unsuccessfully skip a page or two before bed!!!!

Children adore stories for a number of reasons. It creates a time for just you and them, where your attention is devoted to having that experience together. Stories also bring to life their imaginations and provide a world to escape into. Stories can be humorous, informative, thought provoking and heartwarming.

When you have one of those stories that have been read a thousand times, you may wonder how you can extend on this. At Bear Park we often try out a variety of storytelling techniques, designed to share with children the possibilities of bringing a story off the pages of a book.

For this weeks tip, I will use Lynley Dodd's popular "Hairy McClary from Donaldson's Dairy" as an example, but these ideas could easily be adapted to suit any story your child is passionate about at the moment.

Create your own character:

Hairy McClary has so many friends in his stories, could you create a new friend for him? Perhaps you have a pet at home that would make a good addition to the story? Take time to draw this new character and come up with a way they could be introduced.

Consider a new way to tell the story:

Your child knows the story inside out so challenge them to tell the story without the book at hand. In our preschool using the whiteboard as an interactive tool is very popular and engaging. As teachers or children tell the story characters and details are drawn on the whiteboard. The whiteboard enables for dynamic and transformative storytelling, allowing children the opportunity to extend their imaginations and add their own twist to the story. You could try this technique outside using chalk on the driveway/pavement, or utilize a drawing app on a tablet on a rainy day.

Bring the characters to life:

Another idea is to bring the characters to life. Consider ways they could be represented, for example using drawings, play dough/clay or even toys you may have. Set a scene for the characters, perhaps using fabrics as a backdrop and act out your story. You could even try out your stop-motion movie making skills!



Create a spin-off or sequel:

Ask your child who their favourite character is and then support them to create a story about what that character might do in their own story. "I know you love Bottomly Potts, I wonder what he was doing before he decided to follow Hairy McClary? I wonder what kind of adventures he would get up to on his own?" Work together to write and illustrate the story and hold a book launch for the other members of your bubble to celebrate your work!

Easy Cookie Recipe!

These are the easiest cookies you'll ever make in your life!

2.5 bananas (mashed)
2 cups of oats
½ choc chips

Combine all ingredients and bake on 180 degrees for 10 minutes!



Online Resources

Auckland Museum from Home

www.aucklandmuseum.com/your-museum/at-home

Free children's stories on Audibles:

<https://stories.audible.com/discovery>

Here is a link to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern reading Hairy McClary to enjoy:

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/goodnight-kiwi/episodes/s1-e11>

