



Best Start NEWS

www.beststart.vic.gov.au November 2006

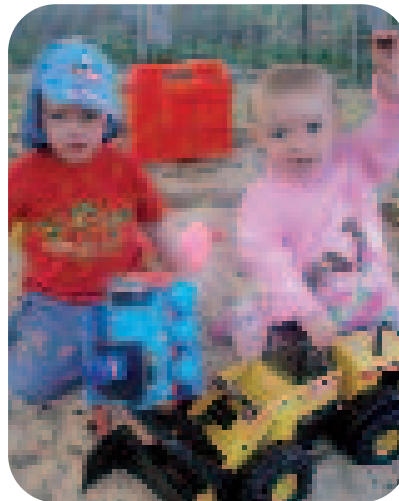


The great outdoors

The weather is getting warmer and it is time for children to venture into the great outdoors. Don't underestimate what can be gained from spending time outside with children. Most activities that can be done inside can be taken outside which can add a whole new opportunity for children to explore these with renewed interest.

Some fun outdoor activities are:

- Fingerpainting.
- Taking a CD player outside and dancing.
- Painting using water and a large paintbrush.
- Looking for bugs – closely supervised by an adult.
- Playing soccer, T Ball or totem tennis.
- Digging in the sandpit or mud patch.
- Planting a vegetable patch and watering it each day.
- Pushing objects around in a wheelbarrow – increasing upper body strength.
- Playing with balls – developing the children's eye hand co-ordination.
- Washing the dolls and their clothes. Pegging the clothes on a line – this is a great activity to develop fine motor skills.



Please remember that sunscreen and hats must be worn when outside during the warmer weather. Children must be supervised by an adult at all times.

How to get fit playing with blocks

Blocks provide children with many valuable learning experiences and a great physical workout. Researchers in America have discovered that if the blocks children play with are weighted it provides them with an aerobic workout. The children used more calories and had higher heart and breathing rates while enjoying the experience of building.



Blocks also provide children with the opportunity to develop their mathematical skills. Some of the math's skills that can be developed include: shape recognition, comparing and sorting different sizes, counting, understanding length, width and height.

Children develop their social skills while playing with blocks. They are able to practice negotiation skills when working to construct a building with a group of friends. Language development is also helped through block play. Children must use language to discuss their plans with other children and describe what they have built.

Children enjoy blocks as they are an open ended activity with no right or wrong way to build and construct with them. The children are able to use their creativity when designing their structures which leads to increased self confidence and self esteem.

Your say

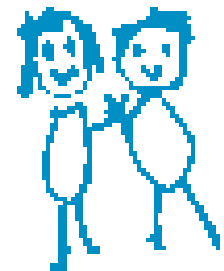


We are keen to ensure that this newsletter carries current and interesting information for parents.

If you wish to see information on a particular topic, please phone Best Start Community Facilitator

Jane Spencer, on 9784 1751 or e-mail

Jane.Spencer@frankston.vic.gov.au



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Kids – “Go for your life” launch of healthy habits for life



A Kids – “Go for your life” facilitator, funded by the Victorian Government and employed by Frankston City Council, will support services in their efforts to:

- **Promote water consumption:**
Tap into water every day
- **Increase consumption of fruit and vegetables;**
Fruit and veg – plant these in your lunchbox every day
- **Decrease consumption of high energy foods and drinks;**
Limit sometimes foods (target soft drinks, lollies, chips and chocolates)
- **Increase active transport;**
Stride and ride
- **Decrease screen watching time (television, computers and games):**
Turn off, switch to play

As we know, infancy and childhood are critical stages for the development of habits that will affect health in later years.

Kids – “Go for your life” is a program designed to help create healthy habits for life. The Victorian Government funded initiative will help communities create healthy environments for children.

We know that helping children establish healthy habits for life begins at home, at child care, at kindergarten and at primary school. The program will help to make healthy eating and physical activity part of everyday life for children living in the Frankston municipality.

The Victorian Government and Frankston City Council together, can make a difference to a child’s future by laying the foundations for good health during childhood and into adulthood.

Early childhood services and schools will receive a range of supportive resources that will encourage the whole community to take an active role in creating healthy habits for life.



Go for life logo

Diabetes logo

Cancer Council logo



The wonder of grandparents and their contribution

Useful tips:

- *Make sure your house is child proof – putting household poisons and breakables out of reach.*
- *Have a box of toys, games and books ready for when they visit.*
- *Take time to listen to your grandchildren. In this busy world it is vital for children to have someone they can trust to share their news with.*
- *Watch them play sport when you can, visit them at kindergarten and school on special days.*

Grandparents are very important people in their grandchildren’s lives.

Being a grandparent can be an opportunity to do things with and for your grandchild/ren that you weren’t able to do with your own children.



What grandparents can do with their grandchildren:

- Help your grandchildren learn about the history of the family. This will keep all those stories alive for the next generation.
- Give them lots of love without the responsibility of being the parent.
- Spend time with them, taking them to the movies, reading stories, cooking, having sleep overs and gardening.
- Keep up with their interests in sport, music and books - depending on their age.

“There’s a saying – it takes a village to raise a child. What this recognises is that many people, other than parents, can and do contribute to a child’s upbringing”

(www.parentlineplus, 2006, p.1).

When is the right time to start kindergarten?

It is that time of the year again! Kindergarten enrolments are being confirmed and places allocated for 2007. Some parents will be wondering if their child will be ready to begin their kindergarten year in 2007.

Some points to consider when you are making this decision:

- Children who have their birthday between January and April, will be amongst the youngest in the grade;
- This age difference is enormous at this stage of a child's life in all areas of social, emotional, physical, language and intellectual development;
- Research shows that a number of younger children are not ready for the formalities of a school program;
- Attend a kindergarten information session and decide whether your child would be ready for a kindergarten experience or would it be better to delay the start for another year?



Some questions to ask yourself when considering your child's readiness for kindergarten:

- Can my child's speech be understood by most people?
- Can my child choose activities independently?
- Is my child able to play without adult help?
- Is my child able to play with a small group of children?
- Can my child follow directions from people other than well known family members?
- Is my child able to separate from me for up to three hours at a time?
- Can my child use the toilet independently?

For more information about the options available it would be best to chat with your local kindergarten teacher.



Each child is eligible for one year of funded four year old kindergarten. If a child has had their funded year and it is felt that they are not ready to continue on to school an application must be submitted to the Department of Human Services for a second funded year. It is important to understand that this is not an easy process and each child must meet quite strict criteria.

Action songs and fingerplays



- Clap, clap, clap your hands* I clap up high
Clap your hands together. I clap down low.
Clap, clap, clap your hands I jump, jump, jump.
Clap your hands together. And down I go.
Continue the rhyme using other parts of the body
eg. tap your knees, stamp your feet, tickle your toes.
Row, row, row your boat
Gently as can be.
Merrily, merrily, merrily,
merrily
Gently down the stream.



Dive into Reading

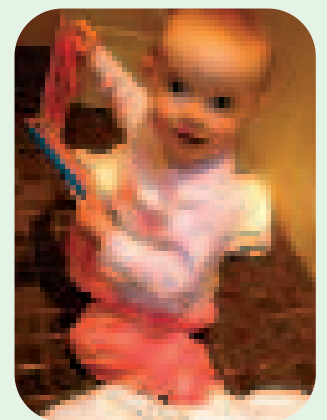
(News from the library)

More reading tips and hints: 2-5 year olds

- Choose books with bright pictures and few words.
- Look at the pictures and make up your own stories.
- Encourage your child to join in by pointing out pictures, lifting the flaps, touching the shapes.
- Show your child lots of different types of books.
- Choose books about familiar objects, animals or everyday events.

Some recommended picture books:

- **Crusher is Coming** by Bob Graham
Read what happens when Crusher, the school football hero is invited to tea. An artful combination of text and illustration.
- **Elmer** by David McKee
Elmer is a fun loving, patchwork elephant.



For more information please contact the Frankston Library on 9784 1020 or email:

libraryenquiries@frankston.vic.gov.au

and the Web site is:

<http://library.frankston.vic.gov.au>

Healthy teeth

Teeth are one of our most valuable assets and parents can help their children to care for them from a very young age.

Baby teeth begin to form about six weeks after conception and when the baby is born 20 teeth are present in the jawbone. Permanent teeth also begin to form before birth.

Tips for healthy teeth:

- *It is strongly advised that babies or young children are NOT given milk, fruit juice or formula to suck on when they go to bed as this will lead to tooth decay.*
- *Start cleaning the baby's teeth as soon as they appear.*
- *Clean the teeth with a soft cloth or small, soft children's toothbrush in the morning and before they go to bed at night.*
- *It is recommended that toothpaste is not used before two years of age.*
- *When using toothpaste only use a pea sized amount on the toothbrush.*
- *It is strongly recommended that parents closely supervise children cleaning their teeth until the children reach six years of age.*
- *Visit the dentist for the first time about six months after the first tooth has erupted.*
- *Suitable snacks would be vegetables, cheese, pasta, yoghurt, fruit and bread.*
- *Offer water as a substitute for sweet, sugary drinks.*

Frankston's Christmas Festival of Lights

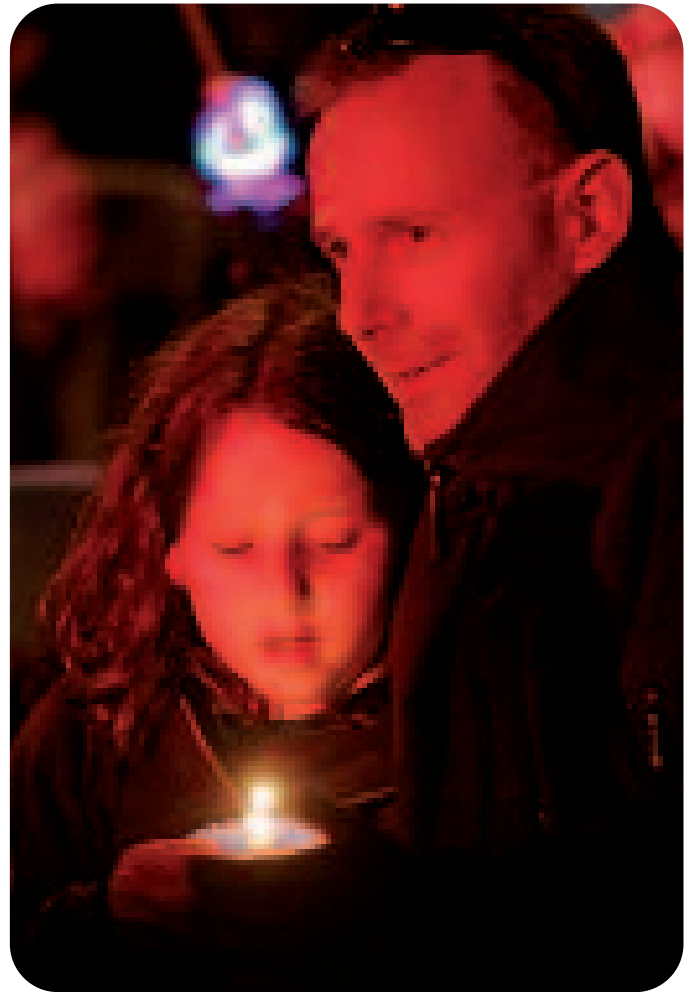
Frankston City launches the festive season at the Christmas Festival of Lights on Saturday, 25 November, from 5:00pm to 10:00pm, at Young and Davey Street, Frankston, and the Frankston Arts Centre.

Proudly presented by Cadbury and hosted by Network Ten's Mike Larkan, the evening promises fun, festivities and family entertainment.

Come and see the spectacular lighting of the century-old Norfolk pine; Carols by Candlelight; the Over the Hedge show; meet and greet Batman and Wonder Woman between 6:00pm and 9:00pm, and song and dance workshops.

Showcasing the great attributes of Frankston and its wonderful community spirit, this year sees the return of the giant children's activity centre, along with an Affordable Arts Fair sweet and savoury food stalls, rides and amusements, a sensational fireworks show and much more.

For further information visit www.frankston.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 FCC FCC (1300 322 322).



Tips to help children become fit and healthy



Movement is important to us all but it is also the indication of our children's developing milestones eg. when a baby is able to lift their head and shoulders at around 4-6 weeks of age.

There is a lot of concern being expressed by scientists about children's weight, future health problems and their declining fitness levels. There are many activities that can help children keep active and mobile at any age, some of these are listed in the next column.

- Young babies need time on their tummies on a mat on the floor when they are awake and being supervised by an adult.
- At about 6-9 months try holding a toy just out of their reach which will encourage them to move and stretch.
- Between 9-12 months children are becoming more active and will enjoy balls being rolled to them or having a large cardboard box to crawl in and out of.

For our children to enjoy these movement activities they also need adequate rest and healthy food.

Please note: children must be supervised by an adult at all times.

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