

April 2011 Newsletter

Dear parents and friends of Cowgate,

What a lovely day it is outside. The sun is shining and the smell of the air is spring like.

This newsletter brings news of a different kind of Easter hunt by Seumas and Hazel; a note of thanks you for your generosity; Hands on Scotland website (thank you Gemma); a message from Cheryl; a message from Karen and dates to remember....o much more to say, but after 19 pages you may have had enough!

The Easter Egg Hunt

On Tuesday Seumas and I went on a little Easter Egg Hunt and came back with not one but two lovely chocolate eggs from Thorntons!

These eggs will be prizes in our Easter Raffle. Have a look at our Easter display at Reception. Robert made the fantastic poster and is helping me sell the raffle tickets.

If you would like a ticket please see me. They are 50p each and there will be two winners. Robert will draw the raffle in a few weeks time.

All money raised will go towards School Funds.

Hazel.

Japan Emergency Appeal / Comic Relief Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who baked and /or bought cakes for our fundraising. Hazel forwarded the following email...

Dear all,

Just to let you know that we managed to raise £187.16 for Comic Relief and the Japan Appeal. This means £93.58 for each charity which is really good. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

Kind regards,

Hazel Graham

Of interest...Hands On Scotland

Gemma (Hay) sent this website which may be of interest to families: <http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/index.html>

Welcome to the Toolkit

This website aims to help you make a difference to children and young people's lives. It gives practical information, tools and activities to respond helpfully to troubling behaviour and to help children and young people to flourish.

The website has two sections: 'How to help children flourish' and 'How to help with troubling behaviours.'

Welcome to the Flourishing section of the toolkit

What is the Flourishing section?

It is a resource that gives information, ideas and activities to help promote positive mental health (flourishing) in all children and young people. It also aims to help prevent the difficulties described in the Troubling Behaviours section and to help improve your own mental health and create a flourishing community.

Who is it for?

This section was designed for parents, carers and anyone working with infants, children and young people (for example: teachers, social workers, foster carers, health workers, school nurses, nursery nurses, etc).

Why was it developed?

This section was developed to fulfil Commitment 1 of the Scottish Government's policy and action plan: Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland (2009) . It was designed to help you make a difference to children and young people's lives, by giving you ideas and activities to help them to flourish.

We hope you will find it useful and we welcome your feedback on how to make it better.

Welcome to the Troubling Behaviours section of the toolkit

What is the Troubling Behaviours section?

It is a resource that provides practical information and techniques on how to respond helpfully to children and young people's troubling behaviour and promote their mental health and wellbeing.

Who is it for?

This section was designed for anyone working with children and young people (for example: teachers, social workers, foster carers, health workers, school nurses, etc).

Why was it developed?

This section was developed in response to recommendations from the Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health (2003). It was designed to help make a difference to children and young people's lives, by giving you tools to respond helpfully when they are troubled.

We hope you will find it useful and we welcome your feedback on how to make it better.

There are many different topics under each heading, for example under how to help children flourish I found the section on 'Healthy Eating' that is at the end of the newsletter this month.

A message from Cheryl

*"Dear parents of our Cowgate family,
I am in the process of organising a charity fundraising event in aid of Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre Edinburgh.*

Maggie's Centre is a sanctuary for anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis, including their family and friends. They offer information, advice, psychological and emotional support in a homely environment, quite a contrast to the hospital wards. All of their services are free of charge and they are entirely reliant on donations. As part of the fundraising event we will be holding a raffle and possibly an auction. I would be extremely grateful if anyone would be able to offer a donation to either of these, even a small gift as a lucky dip prize!

If you would like more information about Maggie's their web address is www.maggiescentres.org

Also you are more than welcome to come along on the evening to join the fun.

Many thanks in advance

Cheryl x

Thank you

Thank you (in advance) to all the parents who supported us with the garden clean up and the open day... we couldn't do it without you 😊

A message from Karen

Relationships in the Nursery

I am currently considering our Key Person approach in the Bambini Room and Salle de Jeux. I plan to gather the thoughts of staff, older children and our parents., (in short the whole community) I want to find out what the Key Person approach means to all individuals involved.

The information will feed into a development plan I am working on looking at Relationships in the Nursery. The Key Person approach is only one strand of relationships I am researching.

It's a very interesting and broad subject. We know the importance of making attachment to significant others, particularly for young babies. Relationships are fundamental to who we are and who we become.

If you have any thoughts you would like to share with me I would be delighted to receive them. I will update you on my findings soon, I hope.

Warm wishes

Karen

Dates to remember...

We are closed for Easter holidays and The Royal Wedding...

22nd, 25th and 29th.

That is all for this month...

*Warm wishes until next month (we are going to hear from Susan next month who is **absolutely delighted** with the babies signing).*

Lynn and the Cowgate team.

www.handonscotland.co.uk

Eating for wellbeing

Eating for wellbeing

Eating well helps children to grow and develop healthy, and is therefore an important part of flourishing. This topic page will help explain how eating well isn't about what we eat – it is also about how we eat.

Providing a healthy, balanced diet

A balanced diet is a diet that provides the full range of essential nutrients that the body needs. A balanced diet provides energy for growth and activity, and will keep your child physically

healthy. It will also help them concentrate and help them sleep well. These are all important components of flourishing.

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well”.

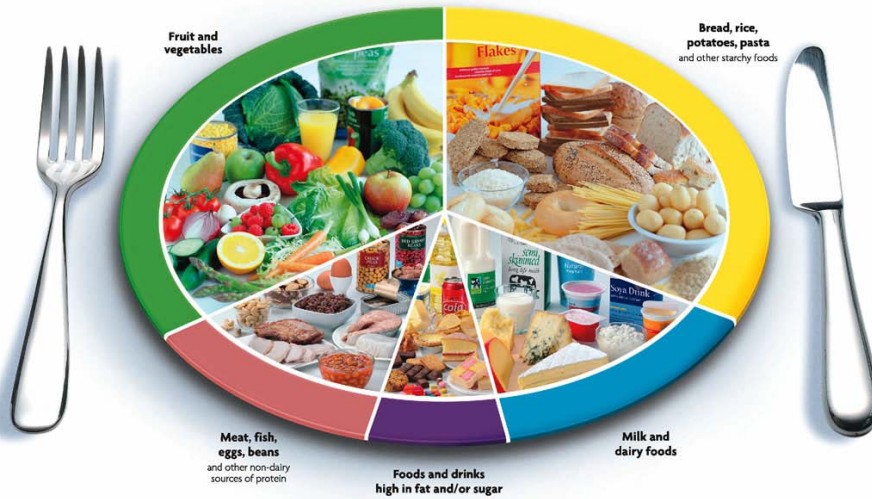
Virginia Woolf

The eatwell plate (below) was produced by the Food Standards Agency and can help you get the nutritional balance right for your child. It is suitable to use with children over 5 years and adults. It is suitable for use by healthy people of all ethnic origins and people who are of healthy weight or overweight. It is also suitable for vegetarians to use. Anyone who is underweight, under medical supervision or with special dietary needs may want to check with their GP whether it is suitable for them. For more information, see www.eatwell.gov.uk.

The eatwell plate

FOOD
STANDARDS
AGENCY
eatwell.gov.uk

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Enjoying eating

Food is our fuel – we need to eat. Enjoying our food is a simple, natural pleasure in life. Encouraging children to feel good about eating is one of the simplest ways you can help them flourish and become healthy, fulfilled people.

We can use mindful techniques to help ourselves and children enjoy eating. Learning to be more mindful about how we eat can help us enjoy eating by slowing down and savouring the experience of eating.

Mindful eating can help us to become more appreciative about where our food comes from and the people who have worked hard in getting it to our table. This appreciation of others and for the relative abundance of food available to us will help us feel happier.

Mindful eating can also help us to learn to read our body signals more effectively about when we are really hungry and when we are full. This is important in making sure that we are eating the right amount of food for our body.

Benefits of family mealtimes

Sitting down for regular family meals can be a challenge for some families. Parents and children seem to be so busy nowadays, and may have work patterns and schedules that don't often coincide. Teenagers may prefer to eat with their friends, away from home. Or they may want to sit in front of the TV or the computer while they eat.

However, eating meals together as a family has a range of benefits. It appears it may be worth making the effort to sit down and have a family meal when you can. For example,

research has shown that if children eat together with the family, they are likely to eat more fruit and vegetables and drink fewer soft drinks.

A project in the US found that teenagers who ate regular family meals reported less substance (tobacco, alcohol and marijuana), better academic success and better mental health than those teenagers eating fewer meals with the family. Teenagers eating family meals which have a positive atmosphere also reported fewer unhealthy weight control behaviours, for example, extreme dieting...

Healthy attitudes and behaviours around food and eating

Parents are often concerned about their child's eating habits. It may be that your child just won't try new foods. This is actually very common and young children have a natural suspicion of new foods.

Or you may be concerned that your child is either not eating enough or is putting on too much weight. It is important that you help your child to read their natural body signals that tell them when they are hungry and when they are full. This will help them eat the right amount of food for their body.

Eating too much or too little is sometimes a way of dealing with negative emotions that we don't know how to express. It is important to help children express their emotions clearly in healthy ways so that they don't become dependent on food to do this.

Our eating habits as adults have an important effect on the eating habits of our children. This is partly because we have the responsibility of buying and preparing food for them. But it is also because our way of thinking about eating is likely to affect the way they think about it. If we are positive about eating and enjoy our food, our children are more likely to be this way too. On the other hand, we may be worried about eating the 'wrong' foods and focussed on our body weight. Or we may use food as a way of comforting ourselves when we feel bad. We need to be aware of how our feelings and behaviours may affect the way our children respond to food.

“The food that enters the mind must be watched as closely as the food that enters the body.”

Pat Buchanan

How to help children eat for wellbeing

- *Give children smaller portions than adults. Human beings are programmed to eat more when more is available, whether the body actually needs it or not. So if you give big portions, children may get used to big portions and may eat more than they need.*
- *Try to provide a variety of different coloured foods in children’s meals. Children will enjoy seeing a plate full of different colours and the more variety of colours, the more nutritional the meal is likely to be.*
- *Encourage your children to have regular meals. From approximately one year of age, children would normally be expected to eat three meals a day and two between-meal snacks. Skipping meals is not healthy, as it could mean they are not getting the nutrients they need, and children need their energy levels to be topped up regularly throughout the day. Regular meals also provide a routine, which children*

respond well to. Breakfast is particularly important as it provides the energy you need to get you ready for the day ahead.

- *Allow children to listen to their own body's sign of hunger and being full up. So if children say they are hungry between meals, a small healthy snack, such as fruit or a slice of bread and butter may be appropriate. Also, do not force a child to eat a large amount of food if they say they aren't hungry at mealtimes> And don't force children to eat everything on their plate if they are full.*
- *Be a good role model. If you want your children to eat healthily, try to eat healthy yourself.*
- *Try not to put pressure on children to eat specific foods. There is some evidence that if you put pressure on children to eat particular foods, you can make them less likely to want to eat them.*
- *If your child says they don't like a new food, keep trying to introduce the food over time. It can take up to 20 presentations of a new food before a child will try it (depending on the type of food and the individual child). So don't give up the first time they say they don't like it. Give small portions cooked in different ways, for example, you*

could offer steamed carrots, raw carrots, pureed carrots as a dip, carrot soup, stir-fried carrot with garlic, etc. The more a child sees and tastes a new food, the more familiar it will become. Don't pressure the child to eat more than a mouthful if they don't want to.

- *Try not to forbid foods like cakes, biscuits or sweets. There is evidence that restriction of a certain food can have a short-term and long-term impact on eating this food. For example, if you tell a child they are not allowed chocolate biscuits, it is more likely that they will desire chocolate biscuits now (short-term) and when they are older (long-term) and will eat them even when they are not hungry. If you don't want a child to eat too many of these foods, don't buy them often. But, allow them to have these foods occasionally.*
- *Avoid classifying foods as good or bad. Foods aren't really good or bad for you –it's just that some foods should be eaten less than others, as can be seen from the eatwell plate above.*
- *Comfort and reward your children for attention, listening and hugs, instead of food. If children associate food with comfort and reward, then that is how they will use food when they are older. It is important to remember that*

although eating should be enjoyable, the main function of food is as our fuel.

- *Separate eating from other activities such as watching television or using the computer. Children are likely to eat faster and less healthily when they are doing something else and are not focussed on eating. Eating mindfully is important for enjoying eating and for learning how to recognise when we are full.*
- *Whenever possible, eat meals with your children. There are many benefits to family mealtimes.*
- *Suggest saying a few words to show gratitude before a meal. It could be as simple as saying “thank you” or following a more traditional grace. Or you could just create a pause before eating to set the stage for an enjoyable meal.*
- *Encourage everyone around the table to slow down when eating. This has a health benefit, as it will help you all to recognise when you are full. You can try this by putting your fork down between every mouthful or every second mouthful. Or, for each forkful, you could try smelling it, putting it into your mouth, noticing the taste, then the texture, then how it feels when you swallow it.*

- *Ask children what they think of the taste, texture and smell of the food they are eating. Remember to allow them to have their own opinion about the food – their taste-buds are different and they will have a different experience from you.*
- *Develop children's interest in food. Talk about what you are eating with your child – where they think the food came from, how it was grown, the nutrition it contains and different ways to prepare it.*

Activities

Here are some activities you can try with children to encourage eating and wellbeing:

Pick your own

Visit a farm or 'pick your own' site with your child. This can help them understand how food is grown, picked and delivered to the shops. Picking their own fruit or vegetables can make them feel they have contributed to a meal and may make them more enthusiastic about eating it.

Grow your own

Try growing some herbs or salad vegetables. You can do this in pots if you don't have a garden. This can help children understand where food comes from and can help them get excited and food and the eating.

Helping to cook

Involve your child in cooking their meal. Even the youngest child can help wash vegetables or sprinkle cheese on a pizza. Older children can make packed lunches or sandwiches. Teenagers can help decide what to eat for dinner and work with you to cook it. The more children know about how food is prepared, the more likely they are to eat it. And being involved in cooking will help to improve their sense of independence and confidence.

Other topics in the 'how to help children flourish' section is:

What is Flourishing?
Character strengths
Confidence
Creativity
Emotional balance
Good relationships

- Gratitude
- Happy babies & toddlers
- Healthy body
- Mindfulness
- Optimism
- Resilience
- Sense of purpose
- Activities and Videos

Until next month...

