

In life, there is nothing better than laughing, especially a laugh when you most need it – CATHERINE O'HARA



MARCH
2026



Educator Of the Month!

Suzi Maude

I have worked in early childhood education for over 20 years, beginning in long day care as both an educator and Director before moving into Family Day Care nearly 12 years ago.

Family Day Care has allowed me to create the home-like environment I believe children thrive in – one built on strong relationships, play-based learning, and the time and space to follow their interests.

At **Happy Little Campers Family Day Care**, my focus is on connection, nature play, and real-life experiences. Our days include bushwalks, community outings, messy play, cooking, gardening, and embracing children's curiosity. I value mixed-age learning, where children learn from and support one another.

I believe early childhood is about more than school readiness – it's about helping children feel safe, capable, confident, and valued. Supporting their growth and building strong partnerships with families is what inspires me every day.

Outside of care, I enjoy time with my family and dog, music and theatre, travelling, camping, strength training, competitive powerlifting, and a (sometimes questionable!) game of golf.

Creating a warm, welcoming space where children feel safe and excited to learn is at the heart of what I do.



NATIONAL RIDE '2' SCHOOL DAY – MARCH 20

Join more than 350,000 children across the nation and ride, walk, scoot and skate to pre-school or daycare today. National ride '2' school day promotes healthy habits, active lifestyles, and safer, more sustainable ways to travel within our communities. It also helps

children learn important road safety skills, including Wearing helmets, following road rules and being aware of others when travelling. Let's celebrate active travel and the positive impact it has on children's health and the environment. [Find out more here](#)

EARTH HOUR – MARCH 28

Earth Hour is a great opportunity to slow down and spend time together. Children can learn about saving energy and looking after the environment in simple, meaningful ways. Earth hour doesn't have to just be one day a year, make it a weekly or monthly thing. Switch off more often and read a book or play a game via candle light. [Learn more here](#)

GREEK YOGURT CHOC CHIP MUFFINS

PREP 10 min | COOK 20 min | SERVES 12-15



- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| INGREDIENTS | ¾ cup un-flavoured oil, |
| 2.5 cups plain flour | 1 cup Greek yogurt, |
| 1 tbs baking powder | ¼ cup milk, (¼ to ½ cup) |
| ½ tsp baking soda | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| ½ tsp salt | 1.5 Cup choc chips |
| ½ cup sugar | |
| 2 eggs, lightly whisked | |

- Pre-heat** the oven to 180 C, line a muffin pan with muffin liners. Spray lightly with oil.
- Combine the dry ingredients** in a large bowl.
- Combine the wet ingredients** in a jug or smaller bowl.
- Pour the wet ingredients** into the dry and mix with a wooden spoon until just combined (a few lumps are fine. Don't overmix). Add a little more milk if necessary (the mixture will be quite thick but it shouldn't be dry).
- Gently **fold the chocolate chips** into the batter.
- Spoon the batter into the muffin cases** (you can fill almost to the top) and bake for 17 to 25 minutes.
- After 17 minutes keep checking every couple of minutes. A skewer pushed into the centre of the muffin should come out without raw batter on it, and the muffins should be nicely golden brown.

Let cool completely on a wire rack before eating so that the muffin cases don't stick. Reheat for 15 seconds in the microwave after peeling off the muffin case if you'd like to enjoy a muffin warm!

Enjoy x

Find this recipe and more at Scrummy Lane

Podcast Reviews

A couple for them, in the morning or in the car and one for you!



Arty Farty | Sydney Opera House

Arty Farty is a podcast for creative kids! Produced by the Sydney Opera House, these talks, discussions and stories will ignite the spark of imagination in our littlest listeners and remind them to always think and create on the edge of the possible!



Story Salad | ABC Kids Listen

Story Salad is a fun and wacky improv storytelling show. Join Matt from playschool and one of his super storyteller friends as they are given three words to make up a story about it, ON THE SPOT! What do a teddy, the colour orange and a castle have in common? No idea! How about a toilet, guitar and a cat? No clue, but we'll find out very soon because Matt and his friend only have three minutes to whip them up into a Story Salad.



Words Grow Minds Parent Podcast | Raising Literacy Australia

Did you know your child's brain grows faster in the first 3 years than at any other time? Hosts Kate Ellis and Amelia Mulcahy chat with Australian and international experts, breaking down brain science into easy everyday things you can do to help nurture your child's development in the early years. No pressure, no judgement, just tips and fun conversations to give your child the best start in life.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Allergy Awareness: What All Families Need to Know

Even if your child does not have an allergy, allergy awareness is an important part of keeping children safe in early learning settings, schools, and the wider community. Food allergies are increasingly common in young children, which means most children will share spaces, meals, and activities with peers who have allergies at some point.

Understanding what allergies are, what to look out for, and how to talk to children about allergy safety helps create a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone.

What Is a Food Allergy?

A food allergy occurs when a person's immune system reacts to a food that is usually harmless. Common allergens in early childhood include peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, dairy, wheat, soy and sesame. Reactions can range from mild symptoms, such as hives or stomach upset, to more serious reactions that require urgent medical attention.

Children without allergies often don't understand why certain rules exist around food. From their perspective, sharing food is kind and friendly. This is why allergy awareness focuses on teaching children *simple safety rules* rather than medical detail.

What Parents Should Be Aware Of

While allergic reactions are rare in children without known allergies, it's helpful for parents to be aware of general signs of a reaction.

These may include rashes or hives, swelling of the lips, eyes, or face, vomiting, persistent coughing or breathing changes.

Parents are not expected to diagnose allergies but knowing that reactions can look different helps families understand why early learning services take food safety seriously.

Teaching Children to Be Allergy Aware

Children don't need complex explanations to understand allergy safety. Simple, consistent messages are most effective and help children feel confident rather than worried.

Helpful messages to reinforce at home include:

"We don't share food, everyone's body is different."

"Some foods can make people sick, so adults help keep everyone safe."

"We always wash our hands before and after eating."

Everyday Habits That Make a Big Difference

Families play an important role in supporting allergy awareness, even when allergies aren't part of daily life at home. Small habits help children understand and follow safety expectations at care and school.

You can support allergy safety by:

- Encouraging thorough handwashing before and after meals
- Reinforcing that lunchboxes are just for your child
- Talking calmly about why food rules exist
- Modelling respect for safety rules, even when they feel inconvenient

Children learn best through repetition and role modelling. When safety routines are consistent at home and in care, children are more likely to follow them confidently.

Supporting Safety Without Creating Fear

It's important that allergy awareness doesn't create anxiety for children. Safety messages should be calm, clear, and matter of fact. Children don't need to feel responsible for others' health they just need to know the rules and trust that adults are keeping everyone safe. Avoid alarmist language and focus instead on simple actions children can take. When adults are calm and confident, children feel safe.

Why This Matters for Everyone

Allergy awareness is about more than food. It teaches children empathy, responsibility, and respect for others. Learning that "not everyone is the same" and that small actions can help keep others safe builds important social and emotional skills.

Keeping children safe is a shared effort — and even small, everyday actions make a meaningful difference.



Find recipes and more information on this article via the QR code.

Source: Health Direct (2023). **Food allergies in children**. Retrieved from healthdirect.gov.au

COUNT AND SORT

This activity supports number awareness, one-to-one correspondence, and early problem-solving.

You will need: Small household items (toy cars, buttons, pasta, pegs, blocks, or fruit) and few bowls or containers

What to do: Invite your child to place a small group of items on the table. Ask them to count how many there are, touching each item as they count. You can then sort the items by size, colour, or type and count each group together.

Extend the learning by: Asking, "Which group has more? Which has fewer?", Line items up and count forwards and backwards. Add or remove one item and count again.



FOCUS ARTICLE: Why Children Need Repetition (and Why It's Not a Bad Thing)

If you've ever read the same book for the tenth time in a row, played the same game again and again, or followed the exact same bedtime routine night after night, you're not alone.

Repetition is a natural and important part of early childhood and while it can feel exhausting for adults, it plays a powerful role in how young children learn and feel safe in the world.

For young children, repetition builds understanding. Each time a child hears the same story, sings the same song, or repeats a familiar routine, their brain is strengthening connections. They begin to notice new details, predict what comes next, and make sense of the world around them. This repetition supports memory, language development, and confidence, helping children feel capable and secure.

Repetition also supports emotional regulation. Familiar activities and routines create a sense of predictability, which helps children feel calm and safe. When children know what to expect, their nervous system can relax. This is especially important during times of change, growth, or emotional development. A familiar book, song, or routine can be deeply comforting, helping children manage big feelings and transitions.

You may notice that children often repeat activities during periods of rapid development or emotional change. This is not a sign that they are stuck it's a sign that they are practising. Just as adults rehearse skills to build confidence, children use repetition to master new ideas and experiences. Saying the same words, playing the same game, or following the same steps helps children process information and gain control over their environment.

For families, repetition can sometimes feel frustrating or boring. However, small shifts in perspective can help. Rather than seeing repetition as something to endure, it can be viewed as a window into what your child is working hard



to understand. Joining in, observing, or gently extending play can support learning while still honouring your child's need for familiarity.

Repetition does not mean a lack of creativity. In fact, once children feel confident with a familiar activity, they often begin to add their own ideas changing characters in a story, altering the rules of a game, or exploring new ways to play. These small changes show growing confidence and imagination built on a strong foundation of familiarity. At early learning settings, educators intentionally use repetition through routines, songs, and experiences to support children's learning and wellbeing. At home, families can support this by allowing favourite books, routines, and activities to be revisited as often as children need.

So, the next time your child asks for "that one again," remember that repetition is meaningful work. It's how children learn, regulate, and build confidence — one familiar moment at a time.



For more information on the importance of repetition take a look at this great article via the QR code.



Support local farmers, it's good for the environment

Choosing food grown by local farmers is a simple way families can help care for the environment. When food is grown closer to home, it doesn't need to travel long distances to reach our plates. This means fewer trucks on the road, lower fuel use, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, which helps protect our planet.

Local farmers often grow produce that is in season, supporting natural growing cycles and healthier soils. Many also use sustainable farming practices that care for the land, water, and wildlife. Buying locally helps protect green spaces and supports farming communities to continue caring for the environment around us.

For children, learning where food comes from builds understanding and respect for nature. Visiting a local market, growing herbs at home, or talking about how food is grown helps children see how everyday choices can make a positive difference.

Simply google "Local farmers market" to find one near you.



Policy and Procedure Review

As part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and maintaining high-quality practice, we are currently reviewing our service's policies and procedures.

We know that meaningful input from families and educators strengthens our service and ensures our policies truly reflect our community, our values, and our daily practices. Your feedback plays an important role in helping us ensure our policies are practical, clear, and aligned with the needs of children, families, and educators.

We warmly invite you to share your thoughts, suggestions, or identify any areas you feel may need clarification or improvement, we are currently reviewing Sleep Rest and Relaxation Policy and Procedure, the Administration of Medication Policy and Procedure and Enrolment and Orientation Policy and Procedure.

You may wish to consider:

- Are the policies clear and easy to understand?
- Do they reflect our shared values and expectations?
- Are there any areas you believe could be strengthened or updated?
- Are there practices that are working particularly well that should be highlighted?

Please provide any feedback via email to your coordinator or FDCadmin@ich.org.au by 7th March. Enrolment policy and Procedure will be emailed for your review. All other policies and procedures are available for Educators on the web. For families on your parent portal.

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Philosophy Review

We are currently reviewing our [Service Philosophy](#), and we would value your input as part of this process.

We encourage you to reflect on the following questions and share any thoughts, ideas, or suggestions you may have.

Some ideas for your reflection of this could include:

- Does our philosophy reflect your values and beliefs about children and childhood?
- Do you feel your culture, background and family structure are respected and represented?
- Does the philosophy clearly show how we view children (e.g. capable, competent, active learners)?
- Does it reflect what you see happening in practice each day?
- Are there important values or priorities missing (e.g. sustainability, inclusion, school readiness, play-based learning)?
- Does it clearly show how we support children's safety, wellbeing and sense of belonging?
- Does it explain how partnerships with families are valued and strengthened?
- Is the language clear and easy to understand?
- Does the philosophy reflect the needs and strengths of our local community?
- How could we improve or update it to better represent our service today?

Please forward any feedback to FDCadmin@ICH.org.au.

Feature Article



SCHOOL AGED CARE FUN!

UNO NUMERACY AND MORE

- 1. COLOUR RECOGNITION.** Let toddlers **divide Uno cards by colour**. It will enhance their knowledge of basic colours (yellow, red, blue, green). Age 2+.
- 2. NUMBER RECOGNITION USING UNO CARDS.** Picking the same number, colour is irrelevant.
- 3. SORTING UNO CARDS BY COLOR AND NUMBER.** A little bit more enhanced: Sorting by both colour and number.
- 4. GO FISH.** Shuffle the cards, deal each of the players 5 cards, other cards face down on the table. One player calls out the card he / she has in hand (example: "Do you have red No.1?"). Other players check their hands, if they have it, they collect both cards, and if they don't, they draw another card from the pile. A player who collects most cards is the winner.



Stick Decorating: Art from Nature

How it works:

Stick decorating is a simple, creative activity that encourages children to slow down, observe nature, and express themselves through art. It begins with a walk, a great opportunity for families to spend time together outdoors while exploring the environment.

Head out for a short walk in your local area, park, beach, or backyard and look for fallen sticks on the ground. Encourage children to choose **smooth sticks with larger surface areas**, as these are easier to decorate. Take time to notice shapes, textures, and sizes, talking about what makes each stick different. This helps build observation skills and appreciation for natural materials.

Once home, wipe the sticks clean and set up a simple art space. Children can use **crayons, paints, or markers** to decorate their sticks with patterns, lines, symbols, or colours. Some children may enjoy creating stories about their sticks turning them into magic wands, characters, or nature tools, while others may focus on repeating patterns or colour mixing.

This activity supports fine motor skills, creativity, and imagination while using materials found in nature. It also encourages sustainability by showing children that art doesn't need to come from a shop sometimes the best materials are already around us.

Image Source: [Days with grey](#)

Did you know?...

Family Day Care Australia has free ready to use resources to help you market your business!!

To assist in building a nationally recognisable 'brand', Family Day Care Australia has developed a range of marketing materials that are free to download for members

You can access the full suite via the Social Media Assets tile in the **Marketing My Business Hub** section of the [Member Zone](#).

The Family Day Care Australia Market My Business Hub includes a range resources such as:

- Promotional videos
- Educator testimonial videos
- Radio commercials
- Brochures
- Flyers
- Postcards
- Posters
- **Customised family day care logos**
- Social media images (promotional graphics)

To request your own customised marketing material, [click here](#) to enter the Family Day Care Australia Member Zone

5 Minute MOVES Stretch & Breathe

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

This gentle movement activity is a lovely way for families to slow down and reconnect at the end of the day.

Find a quiet space, stand or sit together, and move slowly through each action.

Try:

- Reach arms up high and stretch tall, then lower them slowly
- Bend down and touch toes or reach toward the floor
- Roll shoulders forwards and backwards
- Gently twist side to side
- Finish by taking three slow, deep breaths together

Encourage children to notice how their bodies feel as they move and breathe. This activity supports calm bodies, emotional regulation, and helps children transition from busy days into relaxed evenings. It's a simple way to build healthy movement and mindfulness into everyday family routines.