

Vacation Care – COVID-19

Tuesday 14/4/2020

We hope all our families enjoyed the Easter long weekend with each other and were able to spend this time making the most of this opportunity to celebrate while staying safe at home.

This week we begin our Autumn Vacation Care and we would like to take this opportunity to remind families that these holidays are quite different to how we usually spend this time.

- Our purpose in remaining open at this time is to provide care to families who require it due to essential working commitments outside of your home and for the safety and wellbeing of your children. This unfortunately means that our service is not open for the purpose of socialising with friends at OOSH as we normally do.
- Please ensure you are taking every action to keep your children home and safe where possible. We encourage additional consideration in regard to sending your child/ren to our service at this time. As much as our service is staying vigilant with hygiene and cleaning standards, the safest place for your children to be is at home these holidays.
- Our programmed activities have been planned; however, we will be adjusting all activities that require to be changed to meet with the social distancing and hygiene precautions that have been legislated. This may mean some activities do not occur, while others are changed to ensure our children and educators are staying as safe as possible while at the service.
- We understand that staying home may be more challenging for some families than others; however, we do need to all do our part in staying home as much as we can. Only together will we reduce the spread of this virus within our community and the broader area.

Here are some tips to help you in your time at home these holidays. We will also be trialling some live activities through our Facebook group that you can all join in on, please keep a look out for details on this soon.

Tips for making home fun these holidays

- 1. Keep a routine** – Children thrive on having some structure in the day. Holidays is definitely a time to loosen the reins and relax a bit, but too much can mean you then have another kind of chaos. Keep a designated lunch and dinner time, and schedule in at least one planned activity for the day. This can be a craft, a family game, a sport activity, whatever suits your family interests. Here are some further tips in planning for these school holidays <https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/school-holidays/planning-holiday-activities>
- 2. Get outside everyday** – Plan to go outside and do some exercise every day. The kids can do this on their own, or you can all go as a family, whatever works for you. Going outside even just to the backyard can make a huge difference to how we are feeling, especially when we have been on screens for a long duration.
- 3. Have communication rules** – Having some guidance around how you all communicate with each other during this time can make a huge impact on how successful these holidays are. Especially if you're working from home, having some specific ways and times to ask questions and play as a family can assist with keeping things calm and organised during work hours. Some ideas could be:
 - Establish "requests" through writing this down and leaving at your desk.
 - Discussing the plan for the morning before the day begins, rather than interrupting work every 20mins with a new request.
 - Have a family game at an agreed time that works within a break time for work, such as a board game, sport game or activity on a gaming platform.

- Keep “movie time” for later in the day when both you and the kids are ready to chill and relax. Often inactivity in the morning can result in more agitation and disruption later in the day.
1. **Focus on fun** – Don’t be afraid to discuss the current situation with your kids.
 - Children are more willing to be understandable and positive if they have been informed of the situation.
 - Focus on ways to have positive and fun experiences at home, rather than focusing on what they are missing out on.
 - We are in a unique situation where we can pull back and explore the wonders that are around us without the distractions that our busy lives usually bring. Here is a link to a great resource that focuses on the importance of play in this pandemic and ways you can do this at home that support both yourself and your child/ren. http://ipaworld.org/resources/for-parents-and-carers-play-in-crisis/?fbclid=IwAR0B6BMOPk0qEmUqJ9hDwWhEQ3BB1O6rOrkj4oh86Ov2nTc9nhdqt_XfAI
 2. **Be kind to each other** – We are all feeling stressed and overwhelmed right now including your children. These are not normal times we are living in right now and for some children, this might result in behaviours that are challenging and stressful for the whole family.
 - Approaching family activities, incidents and fighting between siblings with a bit more patience, kindness and thoughtfulness may be hard, but will ultimately result in a much more positive result.
 - Everyone may need some extra time to come to terms with what these holidays will be like, remember to take time to ensure you as the parents are coping with this new life, to then role model this for your children.

A little bit of kindness towards each other will promote a much more positive and enjoyable school holidays for all. Here is a great resource to help promote self-care for parents <https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/parent-and-carers-toolkit/self-care-tips-for-parents>

We hope everyone stays safe these holidays and we look forward to a time where we can all come together in the future for a fun filled vacation care next time.

From

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