



JULY  
2020

# ON *this* MONTH

Nicky's Kids Town

Service event/item ----- 0  
Service event/item ----- 0

## AROUND THE COUNTRY

Asalha Puja Day ----- 05  
World Population Day ----- 11  
National Pyjama Day ----- 17  
International Day of Friendship ----- 30  
Schools Tree Day ----- 31

## Good Afternoon Everyone

We hope you have all had a good week as we have at NKT. The rain kept us indoors some mornings and when the sun came out, we to went outside.

This is a new format for our parent emails and instead of weekly we'll be sending the newsletter out monthly so some items may cross over from one month to the next.

Your feedback on the new format would be appreciated if you have time to drop us a one liner.





## NATIONAL PYJAMA DAY – JULY 17

National Pyjama Day is all about wearing your favourite and comfiest Pyjamas or onesie to work or school to help raise funds and awareness for children in foster care. The aim of the day is to raise vital funds for The Pyjama Foundation's Love of Learning Program

which is offered to children in foster care.

Some of us wore our PJ's to day care and thank you for your donations.

## SCHOOLS TREE DAY – JULY 31

Each year, around 3,000 preschools, kindergarten, primary and high schools across Australia take part in Schools Tree Day. Students nation-wide have learnt how to plant, and care for the seedlings they grow. Schools Tree Day 2020 will be on Friday July 31, although events can be held at any time during the year.

National Tree Day will be held on August 2. **Find out more here**

## PUMPKIN MAC AND CHEESE



PREP 25 min | COOK 25 min | SERVES 12

### INGREDIENTS

**Pasta:** 500 grams orecchiette pasta

### Pumpkin cheese sauce:

4 tablespoons **butter**  
 4 tablespoons **plain flour**  
 2 cups (500 ml) **milk**  
 1 can (400 grams) **pumpkin puree**  
 1 teaspoon **granulated garlic**  
 1 teaspoon **dry mustard**  
 1/4 teaspoon **cayenne**  
**white pepper**, to season  
 grating of fresh **nutmeg**  
 125 grams **mozzarella**, *grated*  
 100 grams **parmesan**, *grated*

### Panko topping:

1 1/4 cups **panko style breadcrumbs**  
 100 grams **mozzarella**, *grated*

### METHOD:

**Cook pasta** according to packet instructions, **Drain** and set aside.

To make the pumpkin cheese sauce: **Place** the butter into a large saucepan over medium heat and melt. **Add flour** and **whisk** to create a smooth paste. **Slowly add** milk, whisking continuously. Continue to **whisk** until slightly thickened, approx. 3 minutes or until the mixture coats the back of a spoon. **Reduce** the heat to low and whisk in the pumpkin puree, garlic, mustard, cayenne and pepper. **Add** the cheeses and stir until melted. **Take** off the heat. **Add** cooked pasta to the pumpkin mac and cheese sauce and mix thoroughly to combine. **Pour** the pasta mixture into a large baking dish (approx. 45cm x 45cm).

To make the panko topping: **Sprinkle** the panko breadcrumbs and mozzarella cheese evenly over the pasta. **Bake** for 20-25 minutes or until the cheese is melted and breadcrumbs are golden.

Recipe and Image from 'mylovelylittlelunchbox.com'

## App reviews

Creative apps that encourage learning through imagination and play.



### ARTIE'S MAGIC PENCIL

Minilab Ltd \$4.49 | AGE 3-6

*There's a monster on the loose and it's destroying everything in its way! Save the day and help Artie to rebuild his world, using a very special magic pencil.* In a land where basic shapes are the building blocks, children can be the hero whilst learning how simple triangles, squares and circles come together to create everything they see around them, from a butterfly to a building, and a car to an ice cream shop.

### A PARCEL OF COURAGE BOOK FOR KIDS WITH PUZZLES

Mariya Stavinskaya Lite FREE or full \$4.49 | AGE 4-7

*Parcel of Courage is a highly interactive graphic book app filled with robust learning activities and unique educational games based on two proven teaching methods: Montessori method and Shichida method.* Many interactive activities within the heart warming story are paired to reinforce the storyline so that kids can better comprehend the content and improve their spatial orientation, listening skills, and visual-motor skills.

### TEACH YOUR MONSTER TO READ

Learn to Read & Phonics Games \$4.99 | AGE 3-6

*Teach Your Monster to Read is an award-winning phonics and reading game that's helped millions of children learn to read.* Children create a monster and take it on a magical journey over three extensive games - meeting a host of colourful characters along the way and improving their reading skills as they progress.



## FOCUS: How a kid's brain works. The meltdown explained.

**How different is a kid's brain from an adult's?** The short answer: extremely. We've always known that a child's brain spends its early years absorbing and processing information, but it's only recently that we've begun to understand what exactly it is about a kid's brain that allows it to be so receptive to new stimuli.

First, a quick overview of the brain. Most of us grew up with a pretty simplistic model of the human brain – left-side logical, right-side emotional. There's a kernel of truth to this, but we're discovering that the reality of the brain is far more complex than we could have ever imagined. Only last year\*, scientists with the Human Connectome Project announced that they had created the most detailed map of the brain yet, and in doing so had discovered almost 100 previously unknown regions, taking the total to around 180, each with their own unique function. The great miracle of life is that somehow, we've managed to get all these zones working in unison to produce what we know as our own minds. What we're now realising is that in children a lot of these zones aren't yet talking to one another. They're all functioning independently, but they don't quite know how to sync themselves up.

**What occurs as a kid's brain develops?** The epic journey from birth to full brain maturity occurs via a gradual and ongoing process called integration, which stretches from the moment a child is born through to their mid-twenties. But to understand why your four-year-old just threw a rock at their brother and now both of them are crying you first need to come to grips with exactly how dis-integrated kids' brains are. Under the whole-brain model, the brain is carved up into four basic sections: the left and the right sides; and the upstairs and the downstairs. As noted, there is a kernel of truth to the left-right brain split, although the idea that someone can be "right-brained" or "left-brained" is a total furphy. Instead, it's more about the fact that a lot of the functions pertaining to logic, language and order occur in the left hemisphere of the brain, while the right hemisphere deals more with images, emotions and memories. The left is very narrowly focussed, while the right tends to deal in more holistic, intuitive stuff. Together they balance one another out and allow us to see both the specifics of something and the big picture. Then there's the downstairs-upstairs split. The area around our brain stem is often called the primitive brain because it deals with instinctual reactions and basic functions. When you're startled by a loud noise, or even when you breathe or blink, it's your downstairs brain in action. Meanwhile, the area of the brain just behind your forehead handles all the higher order functions that we might consider unique to humanity – thinking, imagining and planning for the future. When we talk about a child's epic journey to maturity, this is what we're talking about – the cerebral cortex doesn't fully settle down until around the age of twenty-five. Indeed, it goes through major renovations each time a child passes from infancy to childhood to adolescence to adulthood. So, when your children – whether they're age 2 or 22 – make terrible decisions, or when they take absurd risks, or when they became inexplicably emotional about small things, or when they



become affixed to a certain schedule, this occurs because one part of their yet-to-be-fully-integrated brain has taken charge of a situation and isn't letting the other parts have their say. (And yes, this can also be applied to some adult behaviour too.) Fortunately, a child's brain is primed to unify these different components of the brain, thanks to a phenomenon called neuroplasticity.

**What is neuroplasticity?** Another of the game-changing discoveries neuroscience has made in the past decade has been the concept of neuroplasticity. Basically, neuroplasticity refers to the fact that the brain is always evolving and changing in response to its environment and the tasks required of it. For a simple example of how this works, think about how you lived before you owned a smartphone. Now think about how easy you find it to navigate and use that phone, how simple it is to move between apps, to find information, to like something on Facebook. Your fingers and mind are working in remarkable harmony, yet when you first held the phone in your hand you would have been clumsy and confused. Everything took conscious, considered thought. Through the creation and reinforcement of new neural pathways, you have literally rewired your brain to adapt to the presence of the smartphone, to the point where using it is next best thing to instinctual. But adult brains take a lot more rewiring than a kid's brain. The mere fact of full integration means that any change in function requires considerably more architectural rearrangement of your neurons. It is literally harder to teach an old dog new tricks. Kids' brains, on the other hand, are springy and mouldable, like Play-Doh. They're just working out how A connects to B, or perhaps why A should connect to C instead. That's why every interaction a child has with the world becomes meaningful, no matter how banal it might seem to the parental observer. They're constantly primed to make new connections – just look at how quickly a three-year-old learns how to use an iPad. But the malleability of these connections also means that they're inherently fragile. They can be easily rewired – hence how easily children adapt to new circumstances – or the connection can become fuzzy or weak. It's this latter phenomenon that *The Whole-Brain Child* is concerned with: the way a child's lack of neural integration can lead to difficult and outlandish behaviour and, perhaps more importantly, how to deal with it.

## NUMBER TUNNELS

**Supplies:** A4 Coloured card, markers, balls (plastic ball pit ones are great), tape.

To set up, choose an open space in your home. Cut card in half long ways. Add a number or spots to illustrate each number (like a dice) to each strip. Stick one edge of the paper to the ground and then the other, so it creates an arch and you're ready to roll.

**Play:** Ask your child to roll the same amount of balls as the number on top of each tunnel. Find this activity and many more toddler and pre-schooler activities at [@kristinatoddlerapproved](#) on Instagram.





**So, it's possible to avoid this kind of behaviour?** Well, no. Some degree of day-to-day insanity is part and parcel of being a child. That's what happens when the brain isn't sufficiently integrated. Kids can't provide enough context for their feelings or thoughts, so they spin out of control, hence the tantrums, sulking, fights and meltdowns. Instead what Siegel and Bryson are interested in is how you can use this knowledge to rethink the way you approach your child's crazier episodes. The fundamental philosophy of *The Whole-Brain Child* is that rather than seeing these crisis points simply as necessary obstacles to be endured – though they are certainly that – they're actually opportunities to connect with your child and to conjure something consequential out of the turmoil. They believe that by identifying and then responding from the same intellectual or emotional position as your child, you can start on to the same page and then help bridge the divide, thus helping them reinforce the connections between the different sections of their brain.

For instance, if a child falls over and starts crying uncontrollably, our first instinct is to try and soothe them: "It's alright. You're fine." They are fine, and we can see that, but kids aren't operating like us. At that moment, the child is consumed by the right side of their brain. The powerful emotions of fear and pain are holding court, so they can't put the trauma in perspective. Siegel and Bryson argue that a more productive way of responding to the eruption is to acknowledge the emotion, and then to try and activate that left side by helping the child to talk about it – to tell the story of what happened and why it made them feel like they do. That way, you're helping them wed

together those right and left aspects of their brains and giving them better tools with which to react when something similar happens again.

Strategies like these aren't intended as a cure-all panacea for behavioural excess, but rather a way of reframing the moments that challenge you most as a parent, and to find in them a new opportunity for connection. There's so much focus on providing children with "meaningful" experiences these days that it's easy to lose sight of the fact that, for a child, every moment is filled with meaning. That's simply how their brains are wired. Give them enough food, sleep and stimulation and these developing brains will build themselves.

But by the same token, this isn't to say that parents themselves need to be in a state of constant hyper-vigilance, making sure that every interaction with their kids is productive. Quite the opposite: by understanding the fundamental principles on which a child's brain operates, you can better offer your energy where it's needed, rather than running yourself ragged trying to put out spot fires before they arise and creating some mythical "perfect" nurturing environment for your young ones. Most of the time, simply being present with your child, listening to where they're coming from and responding in kind, is more than enough. Their remarkable brains – maturing, mysterious and kind of magical – will take care of the rest.

**Follow the link for more of this article and useful links** How a kid's brain works, The meltdown explanation. (2019, July 18). Hello Lunch Lady Issue 5 From <https://hellolunchlady.com.au/parenting/kids-brain-works/>

## HEALTH & SAFETY: Dental Care

It is important to look after your child's teeth from the moment they start teething. Keeping your child's teeth and gums clean will protect against infection, cavities and pain. Decayed baby teeth can damage the permanent teeth underneath.

Brush your child's teeth twice a day, using small circular motions. Their teeth should be cleaned after eating and before bed using toothpaste with fluoride that is suitable for children. This can help to strengthen the outside of the teeth and prevent decay. Make sure they brush for at least 2 minutes and remind them not to swallow the toothpaste.

*Help your child to brush their teeth from the time they get their first tooth until they are 7 or 8. After that, supervising them is still important.*

- Try to get into a regular tooth brushing routine, and give your child plenty of praise when they brush their teeth well.
- Replace toothbrushes or toothbrush heads every 3 months.
- Children should floss as soon as they have 2 teeth that are in contact with each other. You should supervise flossing until they are about 10.
- To develop strong teeth, make sure your child eats a healthy, balanced diet and avoids foods with a lot of added sugar, such as lollies, biscuits and soft drinks. Always choose fluoridated tap water.

Source: [www.healthdirect.gov.au/dental-care-for-children](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/dental-care-for-children)



### LET'S RE-FOCUS ON REDUCING

**Has COVID-19 changed your sustainable focus?** Amid understandable concern over health and hygiene during the pandemic, the problem of disposable plastics has taken a back seat. Demand for products such as disposable wipes, cleaning agents, hand sanitiser, disposable gloves and masks is at a record high. Unfortunately, they're also being thrown out in unprecedented volumes.

**So what can you do now that the immediate threat is beginning to subside?** reuse what you have, and try to store rather than throw out items for donation or recycling.



#### Try to re-engage your old routines.

- Remember your reusable coffee cups (if your local café allows it).
- Use your own shopping bags, if need be wash them or use bags on rotation allowing 3 days between uses.
- Purchase bulk fruit and vegetables from local growers.

<https://theconversation.com/using-lots-of-plastic-packaging-during-the-coronavirus-crisis-youre-not-alone-135553>





Birthday wishes go to .....

Christian (Goanna) who turned 3 on 27<sup>th</sup> June  
 Lime (Cockatoo) turned a big 5 on 27<sup>th</sup> June too!

Scott (Goanna) turned a happy 3 on 10<sup>th</sup> July  
 Tanya (Cockatoo) turned 4 on 15<sup>th</sup> July  
 Nico (Cockatoo) turn 5 on 21<sup>st</sup> July

Shannon (Educator) celebrated her birthday on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

### **Fit and Funky with Miss Paula**

Miss Paula's classes have resumed in the Goanna Room on Thursday morning starting @ 9.30am.

Miss Paula has handed out enrolment forms to the children if you would like your child to be included in her classes. Please contact her direct.

Paula Perks [infofitfunkykids@gmail.com](mailto:infofitfunkykids@gmail.com)

Classes are suitable for 2-5year olds and they always have lots of fun.

### **Sock Wrestling**

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

Try sock wrestling for a fun and physical challenge either indoors or outdoors. Trying to reeve one another's sock isn't as easy as it sounds – it can be energetic and at time hilarious.

Mark out the wrestling area using soft items. Explain to your child that play is to be kept within the ring to keep everyone safe. You also need to agree how to stop the wrestling match at any time, e.g. by using a clear command word such as 'stop'. Explain the rules to your child – that the object of the game is to remove the other person's socks. Wrestlers must try to stay on their knees and not stand up at any time. The winner is the first person to get the other person's socks off. Sit opposite each other and put on your socks. Once ready, say: 'On your marks, get set, go!'

Source: [www.grapevine.org.nz/articles/teacher-talk-sock-wrestling](http://www.grapevine.org.nz/articles/teacher-talk-sock-wrestling)

Have a great weekend  
 From your NKT Team  
 Email [admin@nkt.com.au](mailto:admin@nkt.com.au) ph 9247-9280



### **CAPTURE ORGANIC MOMENTS**

*"Time moves quickly. Beauty, love and sacred moments are intertwined with pain, change, and loss. It is undeniably hard but this imperfect woven tapestry of instants and emotions empower us to savour life at its fullest. I believe in telling honest stories to pass down to our kids, as a legacy. It grounds them and hopefully, give them a sense of belonging.*

I think that a series of pictures that tell a unique story of a perfectly imperfect life is far more engaging than a posed portrait. The ability to freeze time on a particular day will transport you back to that year and show your unique personalities and lifestyle that are evolving throughout time. The walk to your neighbourhood playground might seem ordinary today but will become a treasured memory in a while." - Photographer *Juliette Fradin* shares her perspective of family photography.

*We are lucky today that our phone can take spectacular photos, and though a burden at times they don't leave our side often. Start capturing the imperfect moments that will later remind you of all the little moments that are so special.*

Source: [milkbooks.com/blog/family/spotlight-on-a-photographer-juliette-fradin/](http://milkbooks.com/blog/family/spotlight-on-a-photographer-juliette-fradin/)



**Feedback**   
 is always welcome