

# Well being update...



## WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER...

Now, more than ever, we need to be very focussed on **wellbeing for everyone** through this overwhelming time. It can be easy to overlook concerns in the wellbeing of children as they may feel trivial compared to what adults need to be currently concerned about. Of course you love your children but spending intense amounts of time together under stressful conditions and stuck inside for long periods will **inevitably lead to frustrations** for all.

However, we know that all **behaviours are children's ways of communicating their needs** to us. At Birrahlee Preschool we have been closely observing children through the changes that are happening in **every aspect** of their lives. We will be open in our communications with you as we use our **professional judgement in interpreting those behaviours**. We are also looking at how to support the wellbeing of children who are currently staying home.

There is a tsunami of support and ideas available, so we have gathered some from trusted sources. We would like to **share proactive measures in promoting wellbeing**, especially for children but including parents. Then we want to share ideas on how to **recognise and support to children's stress, worries and anxiety**. We might also consider that we have been provided with an opportunity to slow life down, spend more quality family time and really take time to smell the roses.

**Mindfulness** is a proven way to manage and reduce stress and worry which are expected during these difficult times for all of us. Children are never too young to start practising mindfulness and hopefully parents benefit when joining in.

## SMILING MIND



<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/thrive-inside>

**Smiling Mind** has a free Australian App that has a variety of fun and relaxing mindfulness meditations for pre-schoolers, older children, teenagers and adults.

## ABC KIDS LISTEN APP



<https://www.abc.net.au/kidslisten/>

**ABC Kids Listen App** is a free Australian curated and trusted compilation with a variety of calming tracks such as classical music, Sound Walks through a rainforest or by the beach and Sleep Through. There is so much more with story readings, dance music, sing-along tracks, Little Yarns – about Indigenous languages and culture, Imagine This – talking to kids about the 'big' topics such as Why Did All The Dinosaurs Die?, etc.

**Yoga** Do some yoga together <https://thekarmaclass.com/> or <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga>

**Play** screen free, unstructured, uninterrupted, extended **time to play is a perfect source of relaxation for children**. This can be with or without adult involvement, however it is important that it should be child led play. So much of **life is out of their control** right now. They need to be empowered **to be in control of their play**, make their own choices and even for short periods to lead adults in how to join their play. **Adults need to let go a little** (within safe & reasonable boundaries) and not be tempted to lead the play **INSTEAD** to follow their child's lead. Most of the apps and websites recommended here have more information about promoting play.

## PARENTAL AS ANYTHING



<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/parental-as-anything-with-maggie-dent/nature-play-can-still-happen-during-coronavirus/12103388>

**Movement and Nature:** Don't forget the importance of remaining active and getting outdoors. We know that physical activity is good for our bodies and it is equally important for **our mental health**. If you are able to combine that with getting out in nature then you are on a real winner. In one episode on ABC's Podcast, Parental As Anything, Maggie Dent talks about the importance of nature. There are other great episodes (20-35 mins) with different guests about play, talking to children about COVID19, managing emotions, screen time, handling tantrums, making friends, etc.

**Predictability** consistent routines, expectations and boundary setting and knowing comes next, are very important to children. It lets them know that the **adults in their life are in control and will take charge to keep them safe and secure** (even if they bristle against it at times and try to fight it off). Having said that, we also need to be a little more relaxed and not let this be a source of stress for everyone.

**Good bedtime rituals, plenty of sleep, nutritious food and keeping in good health** will support children's wellbeing too.

The Australian Government has created this amazing parenting resource with endless, trusted information, including the idea of routines, sleep, food and health.

## BEYOND BLUE


<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/age-1-5/mental-health-issues>

### Recognising Stress, Worries and Anxiety in Children

**It is expected that everyone will experience varying levels of stress and anxiety at present.** These symptoms may come and go. Children may show signs through physical, emotional or behavioural symptoms.

**Physical** – unexplained sore tummy or headache; regression in toileting; changes in eating or sleeping; excessive fatigue; is excessively restless, fidgety, hyperactive, or distracted.

**Emotional** – excessive crying, tantrums, whingeing, clinginess, withdrawal, meltdowns, overly sensitive, easily frustrated, constantly seeks reassurance, lacks self-confidence, asks what if..? questions all the time, unusually withdrawn/quiet or unusually talkative.

**Behavioural** – unusually non-compliant or argumentative, being rigid in their thinking and acting, aggressiveness, excessively impulsive, avoidance of certain situations or people, nervous habits such as nail biting, new fears.

Beyond Blue has some great tips and checklists to track and support your child's well being

Dr Louise Porter, Australian psychologist quote,

***"On the basis that you cannot reason with people when they are being unreasonable, and neither can you give a drowning person swimming lessons, when children have become emotionally overwhelmed in these ways, our task is not to explain (yet again) how they should be behaving."***

We need to educate and **support children to understand their emotions, how to calm, how to problem solve and how to find alternate ways to manage themselves.** Raising Children and Beyond Blue have excellent articles about this as well as on the Parental As Anything Podcast.

## BE YOU


<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/mental-health-issues-and-conditions/supporting-children-and-young-people-experiencing-anxiety>

**Be You** provides educators/parents with this useful guide to supporting children through stress, worries and anxiety

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Please do not hesitate to talk to your child's teacher or myself if you want to chat about this topic or have any concerns. You can call or email.

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