



Helping Children and Families Association Newsletter May-June 2012

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Hello!

Welcome to Helping Children and Families Association's first newsletter for 2012. I'm hoping to have a newsletter ready to send out to volunteers and families bi-monthly. The newsletter will report on the activities of HCFA committee, coordinator, volunteers and general events in the community relevant to families of Armidale and surrounds.

In addition, I hope to add something interesting that relates to and supports positive parenting, children, health and the environment using research from reliable sources and anything else that might capture imaginations i.e. easy and quick recipes, art and craft and ideas which I have collected over the years of being a mum of four children, a friend of many mums and an early childhood educator for children's services.

It sounds a bit ambitious but I'm up for the challenge and the fun!!!

I would like to invite any ideas, recipes, interesting articles you may have to add to the next newsletter. I hope you enjoy the read.

Volunteers and Families

There are 9 families helped by HCFA home visiting volunteers who visit at least once a week for a couple of hours each time. From all reports the families and volunteers are very happy with their arrangements with positive feedback given from both volunteers and families.

HCFA Committee

We have a very strong and focused management committee who are dedicated to making sure HCFA is working efficiently, effectively and safely within the Armidale community. At the moment the main focus is acquiring funds to keep the organisation and service operating well. Last month HCFA was given a grant from the Armidale and Dumaresq Shire Council that was much appreciated and will go towards training new volunteers, in July 2012.

With funds collected from last year's Armidale Baby Expo, HCFA were able to purchase a new computer and update the system. Updating the computer system is still ongoing, including our website, now live for everyone to visit: hcfa.org.au I will upload the bi-monthly newsletter on this site and place any other important information on there.

HCFA has once again been kindly invited to participate in the Armidale Baby Expo a yearly event held on the 27th October 2012. This event has great fund raising and promotional opportunities including a free stall and funds collected from the gold-coin door entry. We need volunteers for the day, I will be there all day and could do with the company.

Baby Expo will be held on Saturday 27th October 2012, if anyone would like to volunteer help at Armidale Baby Expo please let me know.



Parenting positively: <http://www.maggiedent.com/content/message-parents>

Author and social engineering expert Maggie Dent has written a book entitled 'Real Kids in an Unreal World', as well as many others, she reports on the modern-day issues of raising children with the aim of them growing into resilient, socially adjusted adults, however, she acknowledges how difficult it can be for parents to do this in a materialistic, confusing, contradictory, high paced world that we now live in.

Last March 2012, I attended the annual Early Years Conference organised and hosted by Armidale Family Support Service with guest speaker Maggie Dent. She was truly inspirational, very funny and extremely practical when it came to parenting skills, techniques and raising healthy, happy children, while keeping sane at the same time.

Some of the points I jotted down while listening to Maggie speak were as follows:

- ❖ We need to nurture the whole child, it's not just about intelligence. The heart and wellbeing of the child needs attention too. Children want to 'feel felt' they need to know you understand them, respect them as individuals and love them no matter what.
- ❖ Children need to be protected from modern world influences, i.e. sexualising pre-teen girls, violent computer games and too much screen time, Maggie suggests banning screens altogether, make them go outside and get dirty.
- ❖ Have little family rituals that children find fun and exciting. It helps them feel connected to their family and creates wonderful memories (emotional memory) that they will pass on and continue with their children.
- ❖ Children need time to ponder this is how they turn short-term memory into long term memory. We need to provide this quiet space of contemplation for our kids.
- ❖ Children have an incredible imagination and parents can join in with the imaginary world of their child to make them feel secure in situations where the parent is absent. Here are some of Maggie's ideas:

'Jar of Kisses' - This is a great idea for parents who need to leave their child at day care or preschool and the child finds it hard to separate from their parent. Send a special 'jar of kisses' from both or either parent, whenever the child is feeling sad or needs mummy or daddy they can get their 'jar of kisses' and have a kiss from them anytime they need to (ages 2 to 5 years).

Leave something that has a scent (perfume) of the parent, like a scarf, pillow or blanket that the child connects with the parent (0 to 5 years).

For older children you can write little 'I love you' notes on school lunch wraps (over 5 years).

Play: I love you as much as to the moon and back or all the sand in the ocean, get your child to think up their own I love you as much as...., it's really surprising what they come up with.

A good one for bedtime routines.

Recipe for May-June 2012

The weather is really cold now so good old winter warmers are needed to satisfy hungry tummies big and small. This recipe is from taste.com, I am going to try it on my kids this week.

Chicken Pasta Bakes

15 minutes

Cooking Time

40 minutes



Ingredients (serves 4)

- 2 large (about 500g) chicken breast fillets
- 1 1/2 cups (175g) small dried penne pasta
- 260g butternut pumpkin, seeded, peeled, cut into 2cm cubes
- 1 cup (150g) frozen peas
- 1 cup (70g) broccoli florets
- 1 1/4 cups (310ml) tomato pasta sauce
- 1/2 cup (40g) coarsely grated light cheddar

Method

1. Preheat grill on high. Cook the chicken under grill for 6-7 minutes each side or until cooked through. Set aside for 10 minutes to cool slightly. Coarsely chop and place in a large bowl.
2. Meanwhile, cook the pasta following packet directions until al dente.
3. Cook the pumpkin in a large saucepan of boiling water for 10 minutes. Add the peas and broccoli and cook for a further 1 minute or until tender.
4. Preheat oven to 180°C. Combine the chicken, pasta, pumpkin mixture and pasta sauce in a large bowl. Divide among four 2-cup (500ml) capacity ovenproof dishes. Sprinkle the cheddar over each dish. Bake for 15 minutes or until heated through. Taste.com.au - January 2012, Recipe by Susie Burrell

Nutritional information this information is per serve.

Protein	Dietary Fibre
40.30g	10.60g
Fat Total	Energy
11.40g	1915kJ
Fat Saturated	Sodium
4.30g	660mg
Carbohydrate Total	Cholesterol
42.50g	-
Carbohydrate Sugars	

Serious but necessary-HCFA Volunteers and Families.

Helping Children and Families Association's aim is to support, communicate and effectively coordinate the service so that volunteers, families and potential families and volunteers are made to feel welcomed, heard, respected and given opportunities that positively support and promote a healthy, happy community. These opportunities provided by HCFA, address a volunteer's desire to be connected to their community through supporting children and families and the families themselves who use HCFA to give their children the best possible start in life, to be happy, confident and secure as they grow and become part of the wider community.

Agreements made between volunteers and families are to suit both parties, meaning that the support offered by the volunteer, day and times the visits occur are appropriate and convenient to the family and volunteer. HCFA recognises that occasionally issues can arise which can create awkwardness between families and volunteers and may seem insignificant or not relevant (at the time) but can actually have rather uncomfortable and potentially dangerous consequences for both parties.

Policy and Procedures for HCFA are kind of like the do's and don'ts or rules of the organisation and have recently been revised and refreshed in 2012. Every parent I have signed-up with HCFA, has been given a 'Family Copy' to read and when they sign the volunteer/family agreement they are agreeing to abide by HCFA policy and procedures. You can request a hard copy or I can attach a copy via email, my office in the Armidale Business Centre has a copy. Here are a few of the policy and procedures which are really important for both volunteers and families to know.

Extract of Policy and Procedures:

- The volunteer **is not meant to become an unpaid domestic** help or a baby sitter during the visits or at other times during the week. The coordinator will ensure the family knows this, but volunteers also need to be clear about their role. **No Smoking** including volunteer, carer/parent, visitors to home.
- Part of the volunteer's role will be to listen to parents, so remember **volunteers can't solve the parent's problems for them. However, parents should be encouraged to seek solutions** for themselves, which build on their own strengths and resources.
- Volunteers respect the rights of families to make their own decisions
- When the volunteer or the family would like to change the **frequency of the visits, the coordinator needs to be contacted** and a meeting will be arranged to change the previous agreement.
- Generally **to maintain clear boundaries**, volunteers are asked that they do not immediately provide families with their own personal home phone numbers. However, if after a reasonable period of time, a volunteer wishes to provide the family with their home phone number or mobile phone number this can be done by the volunteer. This frequently enables a more immediate and efficient communication between the volunteer and client family should circumstances change for the family which would mean that e.g. a previously arranged home visit time is no longer suitable. Please **discuss this with the coordinator prior to giving your phone number**
- Taking your child / children along when you visit the family **is not appropriate** as the focus may be taken away from the child /children in the family.
- As general rule, **HCFA volunteers should not travel in the vehicle of the family with whom they are working**. The family members are not able to travel in the volunteer's car. Under extreme circumstances a volunteer may feel that it is important to travel with the family. This should be discussed with the coordinator either prior to the travel where this is possible or after the travel has been undertaken.

Important contacts: President, Peter Galbraith (67723017) or the Vice-President, Margaret Entsch (67738104)

To end HCFA's first 2012 Newsletter, I would like to leave you with this quote from Maggie Dent:

*"It doesn't matter who a child's parents are
Where they live
How much money they have
What culture they follow
Children don't care.*

*What does matter in the lives
Of children,
Yours, mine and others
Is that we feel, we listen and we care."*

From "It doesn't matter" by Maggie Dent

Please feel free to email, phone or drop in with any information for the next newsletter due in August 2012.

Best Wishes From

Bryley Barrett,

Coordinator for Helping Children and Families Association.

Below are some contacts which may come in handy:

HCFA: 0467580016

Child and Family Health Unit: 02 6776 9747 (Trudie or Mari)

Breastfeeding Association: Helpline 1800 686 2 686 (24hr)

Armidale and District Women's Centre (not shelter): 6772 9540 (Robbie)

This is a great service that provides free counselling to women, drop-in, legal advice, and many arty workshops, all free and great for wellbeing.

Safer Options for Armidale or SOFA: 02 6772 9973 (Neroli)

Whole family counselling, advocacy and support.

Brighter Futures (Benevolent Society): 02 67721455 (Jasmin)

Help for families who are struggling and having difficulties maintaining their family e.g financially, emotionally, and mental health. This program offers support with day to day care of children and their families to help them stay on track.

International Playgroup: 6772 3120 or 0428723120

Montessori Playgroup: 02 6772 3628

Toy Library: at the railway station 6772 8838 (Dee)