



# Carer's Newsletter

Issue: December 2011

## Thought of the issue:

A day without sunshine is like . . . night

## From Fiona's Desk . . .

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our newsletter. It was fantastic to see so many of you at the annual Christmas party at Bray Raceway last weekend. Unfortunately the weather was unkind to us yet again - what is it about this particular weekend in November? - however the cover this year really helped and I think everyone there had fun, judging by the smiles on the children's faces.

As usual, a huge thankyou to Mars who so kindly donate the facilities and all that wonderful chocolate to us! Thankyou to Christina and also to Kim for the amazing organisation; to Kevin and his cool band for the music; to the foster care staff who cheerfully painted faces, made leis and generally joined in, one of them even singing!; to our lovely and jolly Santa (Ray) who arrived on a gorgeous Shetland pony; the generous pony owner who took the kids for rides on the sulky; the excellent bbq'ers; Sunicrust (Goodman Fielder) and John Harbour for their kind donations; and most of all to you, the carers, for bringing the children and encouraging their enjoyment. We know how important it is to build happy memories for children - memories of happy traditions are a very precious gift to give our children, many of whom have very bad memories of trauma.

No doubt over the next few weeks, the traditions of Christmas - the creating, shopping, wrapping, decorating, cooking, visiting, eating, celebrating - will all be happening in your households one way or another. Whilst we often become overwhelmed by the business of the season, it truly is a time to enjoy and reflect, and make those wonderful memories.

From all of us in the out of home care teams at CAFS, to all of you, we wish a Christmas that is happy, harmonious, peaceful, fun and sunny!

Enjoy the holidays to follow and we look forward to sharing the new year with you.

Warm regards, Fiona





## Getting to Know . . .

**Shirlene Laurie**



### How long have you been at cafs?

6 years in February

### Best part of the job?

Spending time with the kids. Also because of this, I get to work on my own inner child (some would say outer), and do kid things, but most importantly it's an excuse to go down the big slide at Funbugs!!!

### Favourite food?

At this point in time, the chocolate eclair that I have sitting at home waiting for me.

### Favourite saying?                      Seriously?

### Best holiday?

Ummm not to sure what a holiday is . . . I think the last time I had a week off, I went to a Megadeth concert, which was SERIOUSLY awesome. (Seriously is so the word of the day!). My ultimate dream holiday would be to go to Egypt and kiss the Sphinx's on the nose!!!

### Most embarrassing moment?

I remember when I was a teenager and went to watch Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2. After I was showing off and doing karate kicks in the main street. Needless to say one wasn't very efficient and I lost both feet from under me. Don't think I need to say what happened next, but all of my friends laughed for weeks.

### What are you good at?                      Some would say colouring my hair.

### What aren't you good it?                      Some would say colouring my hair.

### If you could be anything, what would it be?

A painter. I could happily paint houses all day (as long as I get to do a splatter wall).

### If you could invite five people for dinner, who would they be and why?

Sebastian Bach (this is the metal God Sebastian Bach), not the other musical genius, Mr Bach. Would love to rock out with him.

Sam and Dean Winchester from Supernatural. I think it would be interesting to see who they bring along with them.

Eric Northman from True Blood. For those who know, need I say more.

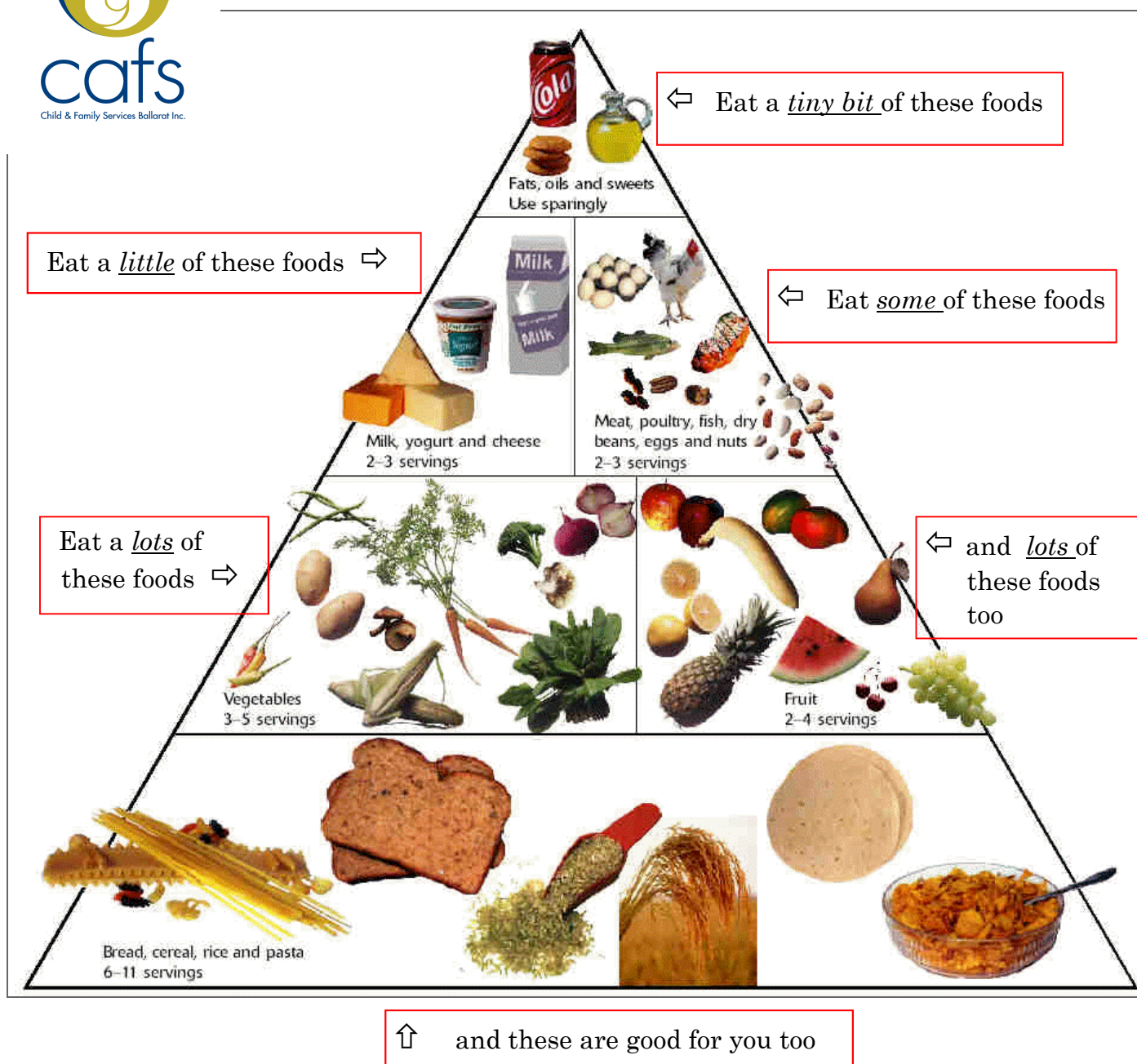
And Miss Toni Schiltz - another musical genius!!!



cafs  
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## The Food Pyramid

To keep our body healthy, the food you eat should be like a pyramid



It's easy to over indulge over Christmas and holiday periods, but nevertheless it's important to get back on track and acknowledge the foods we "should" be eating more of (once the plum pudding and brandy custard are finished!) Summer's always a great time to enjoy fruit and salads.

And don't forget to exercise as well!! It's important to exercise for a minimum of 30 minutes per day at least three times a week (or so they say, but this isn't always possible to fit into our busy day to day life; obviously the person who came up with this idea didn't have children!) Now that the warmer, sunnier weather is here (well daylight savings at least), walk to the park or to the shops, get the kids out on their scooters or bikes, pack a picnic, enjoy outdoor activities - don't forget to slip slop slap).



## Healthy Eating . . .

### Quick & Easy Chicken Caesar Salad

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#### *You will need:*

1/2 ciabatta bread loaf or 2-3 slices of toast thickness bread, cut into 2cm pieces

Olive oil or cooking spray

2 x Chicken breast fillets

4 x rashers bacon

1 x cos lettuce or standard garden lettuce, leaves separated and torn

2 x hard boiled eggs, roughly chopped or mashed

40g Parmesan cheese, shaved

Caesar salad dressing or potato salad dressing (store bought)

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Preheat oven to 220°C / 200°C fan-forced.

Line baking tray with baking paper. Place bread on tray, spray or brush with oil and bake for 5 - 7 minutes, or until golden and crisp.

Heat a non-stick frying pan . Add chicken fillets until cooked through, transfer onto paper towel. Slice chicken breasts. Add bacon and cook for 3 - 4 minutes or until crisp., transfer onto paper towel. Cut bacon into strips.

In a bowl, arrange lettuce, chicken, croutons, bacon and eggs. Drizzle over dressing and top with parmesan cheese.






## Behaviour Around Dogs . . .


There has been a considerable amount of coverage in the media lately about sickening dog attacks on children. Here's some guidelines and great tips you may find useful to discuss with children in your care.





Dogs communicate by a type of body language:


- if a dog is wagging its tail from side to side with their tongue hanging out then it's assumed they are happy and playful, looking for affection
- if a dog has its tail between its legs, ears back, slow movement of tail, snarling or baring its teeth, then it is safe to say that the dog is angry or scared and therefore NOT to be approached.

 Never approach a dog that is not on a lead or tied up outside a shop


 Never run up to a dog - it may think you are going to harm it or its owner


 Do not put your arms around a dog's neck or put your face next to the dog's face

 Do not pat dog on its head

 Do not stare at or corner dogs

 Do not tease dogs by taking away their toy or food


 Do not enter a backyard without permission from the owner or climb up on a neighbor's fence or gate as the dog will protect its territory


 Do not approach a dog when it has puppies or is eating




How to approach a dog:

 Always ask the owner if you can pat their dog

 Approach the dog slowly so it can see you

 Let it sniff the back of your hand, don't make a fist, just bend your fingers under slightly

 If the dog sniffs your hand, pat it gently under the chin, on its chest or shoulder. If the dog retreats after sniffing your hand, then do not approach further.

There comes a time when the most docile looking dog or your beloved family pet has had enough play and can lash out at yourself or children.

***Always keep an eye on children when they are around dogs.***





## Children's Behaviours . . .

Different types of behaviour require different types of approaches. If we handle it incorrectly, the situation can escalate. Our aim is to reinforce positive behaviour and help motivate this behaviour without nagging.

One way of encouraging positive or productive behaviour is to connect the child's choice to a positive outcome. Describe the positive behaviour and then connect it to a positive outcome, keeping in mind that the outcome must be fulfilling for the child. For example:

*"I see you've finished your homework . . . now you can play outside"*

*"Your writing has greatly improved . . . that will be easier to proofread now"*

Avoid praising the child that associates their worth to a choice they've made or something that is people pleasing, such as:

*"I like you when you clean your room"*

*"You make me happy when you get a good school report"*

When negative behaviour is disrupting others, outline the concern or issue and give the child an acceptable option.

*"You can yell in your room or you can play quietly in the family room"*

*"You can share the book without fighting over it or both of you read a book on your own"*

Some misbehaviours can be avoided if the child is given clear instructions beforehand and understands what is to be done.

Use promises instead of threats.

*Source: [www.janebluestein.com/handouts](http://www.janebluestein.com/handouts) (Jane Bluestein Ph.D)*

Some other great websites you may find interesting:

[www.kidsmatter.com.au](http://www.kidsmatter.com.au)

[www.webchild.com.au](http://www.webchild.com.au)

[www.childwise.net/Self-Help-Guide-by-Territory/victoria.html](http://www.childwise.net/Self-Help-Guide-by-Territory/victoria.html)

[www.vic.gov.au/health-community/children/child-protection.html](http://www.vic.gov.au/health-community/children/child-protection.html)

Keep a look out in future newsletters for overviews of these sites.

Children are naturally inquisitive, they love to touch and feel things, especially when they are out and about seeing something new for the first time, something bright or interesting.

No one likes to hear "No, don't touch that", "No, leave that alone", "NO NO NO!" . . .

Try saying "Just looking" when a small child or toddler reaches out for an item that you don't want to be touched.





## School Holiday Activities . . .

Keeping children occupied over school holidays is often a costly exercise, but here's a few ideas that won't break the budget:

- Pack a picnic, even the cricket set or frisbee, and take the family to Lake Wendouree, Victoria Park or any other picturesque parkland
- Keep an eye out in the local paper for free events or craft activities
- Camp out in the backyard
- Take the kids fishing at Lake Esmond or Victoria Park (there's no need for a fishing licence if you're under 18 years old); digging for worms is half the fun
- Long walks or bike rides with a stop over at a park along the way
- Craft activities
- Cooking - cupcakes, cookies (use playdoh shapes as cutters), icypoles (using juice and/or fruit)
- Write a holiday journal (include photographs, drawings or paste in any thing of interest); it's a great way to keep their writing and spelling going over the long break and it's also great for show & tell when they start back at school in 2012.
- The older kids can make their own word searches
- Have a family movie day or night complete with popcorn, curl up on the couch or in a bean bag with your pillow and doona (who knows what the weather will hold?!). Even wear your pj's!
- Put on a play or a song & dance routine with dress ups and crazy hairdo's
- Water fights with balloons or set up your own slip 'n slide in the back yard