



In Home Care

SUPPORT AGENCY TASMANIA



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Newsletter

August 2022

Dear In Home Care Educators,

Welcome to our August newsletter. We hope you are all managing to stay well during these winter months!

In the current economic landscape, we have looked at ideas for play experiences for children and how children's play can be supported without breaking the budget. We have also provided this information to families.

Have you ever noticed that if you leave what may be described as old junk around, whether it be empty boxes, offcuts of wood, old containers (the list is endless), children will almost inevitably play with it? Or perhaps you have observed children occupied with the package a toy came in vs playing with the toy? These examples could be described as Loose Parts and in this edition of our newsletter, we have included information about Loose Parts Play that may interest you and the children you work with.

Loose Parts Play



The loose parts play theory is based on the idea that when children are

presented with a collection of small objects (i.e. loose parts), they have more opportunities for creativity and engagement as they rearrange, redesign and tinker with the parts, creating patterns and new objects as they go.

There are many benefits of loose parts play. Some of these benefits include:

- Developing a sense of independence as children have the freedom to explore different materials autonomously.
- Encouraging language development as children communicate their ideas and knowledge.
- Building creative thinking, problem-solving, curiosity and abstract thinking skills as children explore the materials and discover new ways of playing with them.
- Enhancing fine motor skills as children pick up, hold and manipulate materials in multiple ways.
- Facilitating collaboration, sharing and belonging as children interact with others around them engaged in the play.
- Increasing physical play and activity along with gross motor skills as children move and transfer their creations and use them in further imaginative play.

Loose Parts Resources

One of the best things about loose parts play is that it's relatively inexpensive. You don't need to buy expensive toys - you can find many of the loose parts materials around the house or out in nature. The possibilities are endless!

Here are some ideas to get you started.

- natural materials such as pine cones, sticks, rocks and leaves
- craft items such as pipe cleaners, beads, buttons, sequins, cotton reels, paddle pop sticks and feathers
- household items such as egg cartons, bottle caps, milk carton lids, paper towel and toilet paper tubes
- wooden items such as wood scraps or wooden blocks



All these things can be easily collected from around the home. You can even ask local businesses if they have scraps of wood or other items that they are happy to donate.

Incorporating Loose Parts Play into your In Home Care program is easy! The children can help to gather the resources in both their homes and in the natural environment.

Loose Parts play makes learning fun and visible for children of all ages across many different curriculum areas. There are just a few examples of the possibilities below -

Maths – counting, sorting, creating patterns, exploring size and shape.

Science – experiments around which object float or sink.

Language and literacy – Storytelling, describing the resources using descriptive language.

Art, movement and music – Creating musical instruments, using feathers to paint, dancing with scarves and ribbons.



Pedagogy and Practice

Let's celebrate!

In upcoming editions of our newsletter, we would love to start showcasing and sharing the incredible work that you do as In Home Care Educators every single day! We invite and encourage you to share your successes with us so that can include them in our newsletters for all to see! For example, we would love for you to send us some photos of the children engaging in loose parts play!

Covid 19

It continues to be a worrying time for educators, families and children in relation to the current Covid-19 and other winter illnesses across our state. Accessing the website below ensures that you are up to date with current Covid-19 information.

<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/>

Please continue to inform Wanslea In Home Care of any positive Covid-19 cases within the families you work with, or if you yourself test positive for Covid- 19.

Many IHC families have shared with us how much they value their educators during this difficult time, and the peace of mind it brings them knowing that their children are being cared for at home by caring and responsive educators during such difficult times. Please make sure that you continue to look after yourselves.

Changes to IHC Support Agency Tasmania Procedures

As we have communicated with you previously, The Australian Government has developed a detailed 'IHC Eligibility Assessment' process, which IHC Support Agency Tasmania has begun to embed within our processes and practices for assessing family's eligibility for IHC.

Families may have shared some of these changes with you and expressed surprise or reservations about the updated process, so we feel it's important to provide IHC educators

with the following information about the changes in 'IHC Eligibility Assessment' process.

Under the updated IHC Eligibility Assessment process, IHC Support Agency Tasmania is required to formally assess each family's eligibility to receive IHC every 3 months.

Three (3) weeks before each individual family's FMP quarterly review is due, IHCSA Tasmania will email the family to let them know their FMP is due for review and will also request documentation to support the family's eligibility for IHC (if required).

Supporting documentation may include

- A copy of work roster which clearly shows non-standard hours of work shifts. Rosters must also include employer name and contact details (Letterhead etc).
- A letter from employer confirming non-standard hours of work on company letterhead.
- Copy of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approval letter available from MyGov inbox. Screenshots are no longer acceptable unless they show parent CRN and activity hours.
- Letters from medical professionals.
- Evidence that no other forms of approved education and café (child care) are available or suitable.

Whilst eligibility will be reviewed quarterly, supporting documentation only needs updating every 6mths. If required documentation is not provided when requested, IHC Support Agency Tasmania will not be able to complete a formal assessment of family's eligibility and IHC will be ceased until such time as the documentation is provided and 'Assessment of IHC

Eligibility' is complete. Families will be advised of the decision regarding their eligibility for IHC in writing.

This is a change from the way this process has occurred in the past but rest assured, all families have been given plenty of notice of this change in processes and will be given ample notice when they are required to provide updated documentation to support their eligibility for IHC.

We ask for your help in communicating with the families you work with about the importance of ensuring the supporting documentation is sent to us in a timely manner.

IHC Support Agency Staffing

Moving forward IHC Support Agency Tasmania will continue to be staffed by Roxanne and Nat. Roxanne works a 9 day fortnight (every second Friday off) and Nat works 4 days a week (Thursday off).

Generally, there will be one of us in the office to answer the phone and respond to enquiries. On the rare occasion, that we are both out of the office, please leave a message with a staff member who answers your call, and we will return your call as soon as possible.

IHC Educator Community of Practice

We will continue to hold our bi-monthly Community of Practice online calls

throughout 2022. Our next Community of Practice call will take place at **7pm on Thursday the 1st of September**. You will receive an email with the link to the call in the coming weeks.

We understand over the winter months that there has been lots of winter bugs and illnesses which have prevented IHC educators participating in these 'Community of Practice' online discussions.

We both really enjoy engaging with IHC educators during these sessions and want to hear about the incredible work IHC educators are doing and the programs and experiences you are providing for children.

We very much value your participation in these online sessions and look forward to seeing IHC educators from every region join our next meeting.

We need more IHC Educators

To be able to grow IHC across Tasmania and support more families, we still require more registered IHC educators in each region. We have an ever-growing waitlist of families who require IHC to be able to meet their work commitments (non-standard hours). If you think you may be able to assist any of these families or know of anyone in the community who might be interested in registering as an IHC educator (either with Certificate III (or above) in Early Childhood Education and Care or willing to undertake study

for Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care), please let us or Wanslea know.

Join our team!

Many of our families on the waiting list would be extremely grateful to even have just some of their education and care needs covered, so we encourage all educators to have another look at the waiting list and make contact with families even if you are only able to cover some of the shifts the family requires.

Thank you all so much for the work you do with IHC families and children. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if we can support you in any way.

Roxanne and Natalie

**In Home Care Support Agency
Tasmania.**

**THANK
YOU
FOR
MAKING
A
DIFFERENCE
EVERY
DAY.**