Plans for the new year...

With just under 3,000 mums and bubs now participating in our project, this is a special year with our first cohort of babies born in 2006 soon to be celebrating their 5th birthdays! Doesn’t time fly! Our new 5 year follow-up questionnaire is currently being developed and we look forward to sharing it with those families later in the year.

In addition to this special event, we have a new recruitment phase beginning in July, along with 12 month and 3 year follow-up send outs for those babies born in 2010 and 2008. It will no doubt be another busy year ahead with our project team working hard and kept on their toes!

ARC project grant news:

At the end of 2010, it was announced the Environments for Healthy Living project was to be awarded an Australian Research Council (ARC) grant to the value of $690,000 to continue our research over the next 5 years. With a focus on the prevention of childhood injury, this money will assist in furthering our research into those matters crucially important to the health and development of children as they grow up, and the environments in which they live. It is very exciting news for our project and we look forward to keeping you up-to-date over the coming months!

A call out to all Dads for their help!

Healthy eating habits are important for long term health and well being but need to be learnt early. The way young children are fed is important, but there is very little research on how fathers are involved. The EFHL project has been approached to collaborate with a research team from the Qld University of Technology in undertaking a project to investigate fathers’ attitudes to, and their involvement in, feeding their young children aged 2 to 5 years. If your child is within this age group, please find enclosed with your newsletter a cover letter and information sheet explaining the study and how your child’s father (or male caregiver) can be involved. Also enclosed is a questionnaire which should take only 30 minutes to complete. This is such an exciting opportunity and we would very much appreciate your assistance!

$50 Kmart gift card winners:

Thank you to all those who have so far returned their follow-up questionnaires. We are still waiting on some returns, so please be sure to pop your questionnaires into the post as soon as you can - you might be one of our next winners! The lucky winners of our $50 Kmart vouchers this time are:

12 month follow-up winners:
Louise from Currumbin Valley
Carly from Canungra

3 year follow-up winners:
Gabby from Ashmore
Jennifer from Worongary

Topics for discussion...

We hope you found the last issue’s topic of “Toilet Training” useful for your little ones. This issue we will be covering the area of “Reducing Injuries at Home”, so grab a cup of tea, turn over the page, and enjoy! Please also let us know of any topics you would like covered: rani.scott@griffith.edu.au

Enjoy your Easter break!

With Christmas now behind us, and Easter just around the corner, we hope you and your family enjoy this time together. We look forward to updating you with more project news in our next July issue!
Some surprising facts about injury:

- Did you know the majority (80%) of injuries for children under five who presented at an emergency department occurred in the home environment?
- Did you know that 300 Australian children (aged 0 – 14 years) are killed and 60,000 are hospitalised due to unintentional injuries that can easily be prevented by simple means?
- Did you know that more Australian children die of injury than of cancer, asthma and infectious diseases combined?

It is sad to read these facts, especially when creating a safe home environment is not hard to attain. There are many ways you can easily create a safe home environment to help minimise the risk of injury to your child. Below are some useful tips to help you achieve this around your home:

Safety Indoors:

- Keep cords out of reach of children. Shorten kitchen appliance cords so that they are not dangling over the bench in your child’s reach. You can do this by wrapping the cord and tying it with a rubber band.
- Ensure plastic bags are put away, or tie bags in the middle, to avoid children pulling them over their heads.
- Use the back hot plates on your cook top to avoid children reaching pots while cooking. Turn pot handles in, to avoid pans being pulled from the stove.
- Secure all chemical solutions in one high location. Often bathroom products are stored under the vanities, which are easily accessible.
- Keep toys close where children can reach without climbing. If you do not want them to access a toy, make sure it is not visible to them, so they are not tempted to reach it.
- Cover power points. Those three holes are like magnets to children’s fingers!
- Secure heavy pieces of furniture so they do not fall over when pushed or leaned against.
- Over time, carpets get worn and can result in areas that become tripping hazards. Rugs and floor mats can be slippery, place non-slip backing under them. Check that the edges of rugs are not folding up, as that can cause tripping.
- Attach temporary child safety locks on windows and doors. Cupboards and drawers can also be fitted with safety locks to prevent accessing potentially hazardous equipment.

Safety Outdoors:

The home yard or garden is also a potential haven for injuries. The outdoors is seen by children to be a free area to run and be adventurous, and running often leads to falling, which can then lead to injuries if the backyard is not safe.

- Pools are a big hazard for children! Never leave children unattended around a pool. Check the pool fencing is secure. A self-closing gate is very important because others using the pool may forget to close it after they enter/leave the pool area. Also ensure the gate cannot be opened by a young child (i.e. with child lock facility).
- Just like indoors, keep all outdoor chemical solutions out of reach. This includes pesticides, paints and sprays.
- Garden features should be secured to the ground. For example, bird baths, water features or garden statues can fall over if not secure.
- Make the play area separate from the driveway to prevent children playing or running across the driveway.
- Prune branches of shrubs or plants to avoid eye injuries.
- Secure heavy pieces of furniture so they do not fall over when used.
- Ensure play equipment is stable and in good condition. Wear and tear does occur.
- Keep toys close where children can reach without climbing. If you do not want them to access a toy, make sure it is not visible to them, so they are not tempted to reach it.
- Cover power points. Those three holes are like magnets to children’s fingers!
- Secure heavy pieces of furniture so they do not fall over when pushed or leaned against.
- Over time, carpets get worn and can result in areas that become tripping hazards. Rugs and floor mats can be slippery, place non-slip backing under them. Check that the edges of rugs are not folding up, as that can cause tripping.
- Attach temporary child safety locks on windows and doors. Cupboards and drawers can also be fitted with safety locks to prevent accessing potentially hazardous equipment.

Age Matters:

Remember a backyard that is safe for a twelve year old can be quite unsafe for a toddler. Most injuries occur to children under five because their awareness for danger is not yet fully developed, but their curiosity is! For children under five, they need to be protected from their curiosity. They often need to be supervised while they are playing. Older children however, will need to be given limits and safety guidelines, because although they recognise dangerous situations, they will often try their luck.

“Currently, seven wonders of the world are in the eyes of a child...
There are seven million!” - Walt Streightiff

Sources: Early Childhood Education Qld Govt - www.education.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood
Kidsafe QLD - www.kidsafeqld.com.au