It is hard to believe that Term 1 is already drawing to a close and we will soon be on our two week vacation. Everyone has done such an amazing job settling into the program. The children are so comfortable with the routine already and our days are flowing smoothly leaving so much more time for learning and fun. We have also been overwhelmed by the energy and enthusiasm shown by the parent group. We always have someone on roster who enhances the program and brings extra support to the children. The committee have already earned their keep after only nine weeks. Everything is running smoothly, the garden is thriving and the bank account is still in the black (I think!!). Thankyou, thankyou, thankyou to everyone involved.

Term one is always a ‘getting to know you’ period. The children have really enjoyed learning about some of the different countries of the world and where their friends have come from. We have also learnt so much about each other during our “Ray of Sunshine” activity. All of the children so far have confidently stood before the group and introduced their families and themselves. The children who haven’t yet had a turn have been so patient waiting until their special day. We will continue this activity next term until everyone has had a turn. We welcome our new friend Lewis to the Dolphin group and it looks as though we will have two new friends to welcome next term as well so the kindy continues to grow and thrive.

Now our next challenge is to convince the rest of Hillarys that it is worth the effort to enrol their children in this kindy in 2015. Yes that’s right the fight for enrolments is on again for next year and we would really appreciate any ideas you may have to introduce ourselves to the community. Word of mouth is a very powerful tool and of course thanks to Reeva Cutting (Cameron’s Mum) our Facebook page is much more functional and thanks to Brett Headley (Ruby’s Dad) our website is up to date. We are also planning our Open Day for Saturday 17th May 1pm-3pm. I am currently attempting to get some fliers printed that will need to be distributed. If you have any ideas to enhance this day or spread the word or if you would like to be on the organising committee please speak out. It is not a huge job but new ideas are always great and if everyone gets involved it is so much more fun. Last year we had a bouncy castle, face painting, crown making, play dough table, sausage sizzle, coffee van. Come forward with any new ideas.

For Term Two we will be having a student from Edith Cowan University in the centre for the first seven weeks. Her name is Ms Sarah Russell and she is completing her final year in her training. As the weeks progress Sarah will be taking over the running of the program under my supervision so please make her feel welcome. We are really looking forward to the energy, new ideas and youth that she will bring to the program.

When we return to kindy we will be getting organised for our Mothers Day pamper morning. I will be sending home a note before I leave so that you can mark these important dates in your calendar. For the Seals it will be Wednesday 7th May and the Dolphins will be Thursday 8th May and it will be a 10am start until approx. 11.30am. Hopefully working Mums may be able to work around it but if this is not possible you are welcome to send in a substitute ie a grandmother, auntie etc. Please let us know if your child will not have anyone attending the morning so that we can cater for them.

The children have made a wonderful start to their literacy program and this will continue in Term 2 when we will be introducing rhyming words. The emphasis will still be on the hearing of initial sounds ie what sound do you hear at the beginning of the word ‘cat’, what sound does your name start with etc. We cannot introduce the written form of the letter until they are recognising the sound it makes ie that is the sound and not the letter name. Games at home, in the car etc are a wonderful way to reinforce their learning – I Spy never dates and the children really enjoy this so please turn off the dvd’s in the car and...
give it a go. Comprehension will also be a major focus next term so that we can determine that the children are actually understanding the stories we read and they are beginning to work out how books are put together ie characters, settings etc. Of course we can’t emphasize reading to your children enough and of course allowing them to talk about the material you have read. Talk, talk, talk – this is the most powerful learning tool we possess so even though at times we all enjoy the peace and quiet when they are not talking it is the way four year olds learn and it is wonderful if they are given plenty of opportunities.

In numeracy we have been working on number recognition. At this stage we would expect all of the children to recognise the numbers 1-5. Please don’t panic if they don’t but again reinforcement in their daily lives is the way to go because then their learning has meaning and it is connected to their world ie numbers you see in the shopping centre, on car number plates etc. Once again games such as hopscotch are a fun way to consolidate these skills as well of course as board games. Computers do play a role in our lives but it is so important for children at this age to bring the concrete into their learning. Research shows that understanding has more meaning to them when they can actually pick things up in their hands ie throwing a dice and counting the number of squares on a board rather than on a 2D screen (am I showing my age??) Of course a lot of the children already recognise their numbers to 10 and beyond so we will be moving them on as well. It is important though that not only must they be able to recognise their numbers and count by rote but they must be able to form groups and count them with one to one correspondence. Lots to learn and lots of fun ways to do it.

I could go on forever covering what we are going to learn next term but I will let the program unfold as we go. We will continue to encourage correct pencil grip, trying to write some of the letters of their name, the use of scissors and recognition of their written name. As you can see the term will be another busy one but of course we will have time for lots of fun on the way.

Finally a big thanks to Michelle Kalma for the energy and enthusiasm she brings to the program each Friday. The children are really enjoying their special day with her and I feel so happy that they are in such capable hands. Of course it goes without saying a big thank you also to Julie and Sandra, my right hand men, who are always working so hard in the background to ensure the program runs smoothly.

I am looking forward to Term 2 with all the excitement that lays ahead. Please make sure you have a restful holiday with your wonderful children. Enjoy the extra time you have with them and we will see you all back next term for ten weeks of fun and learning. Seals your first day back is Wednesday 30th April and Dolphins is Tuesday 29th April. The first Friday back is a Seals day so that way you both have two days that first week and the program remains balanced even if the teachers aren’t!

Alison, Michelle, Julie and Sandra.