We are certainly having a productive term. The first week we began our consultancy with Jane Farrall who introduces herself later in this Newsletter. Jane is with us once again this week and has shared her knowledge and expertise not only in communication and literacy for students with special needs, but also in the use of technologies and for us iPads. All teachers have been exploring the use of iPads for the last six months led by the more technologically savvy amongst the staff, most notably Ellen. However, next year we plan to implement the use of iPads across the school along with other technologies to support access and participation in the curriculum.

Jane has worked in every class and with all of the teachers. On Wednesday afternoon after school she ran a most informative and engaging session for staff on the management and selection of iPad apps for our learners. We are most fortunate to be able to have such a perfect fit for our learning needs in Jane. Next year we will be able to have a consultancy throughout the year as she has agreed to be our 2012 Educator in Residence.

This year we have introduced the Low Vision Clinic at Kilparrin with Guide Dogs S.A. & N.T. Most parents returned the required permission forms to enable their child to be included in this initiative. We hope to continue next year as our learners with vision impairment require a different approach to testing vision and its function than can be performed in the specialist’s rooms or hospital clinic. With the support of the Low Vision Clinic, teachers can better develop curriculum adaptations to enable access and participation in the curriculum. This collaboration with Guide Dogs is appreciated and highly valued.

We have had seven teachers studying Hearing Impairment at Masters Level this year. This is a huge commitment to professional development and these teachers are to be congratulated for their dedication and contribution to the knowledge and professionalism of all of us who work with them. Having such a group engaged with the current research and practice in the field is of benefit to the staff as a whole. This study is being undertaken with the support of DECD.

The Learners’ Garden is developing well with all of the learners gaining gardening skills planting and caring for the crops which are growing beautifully. The Yellow Squares in particular are sharing some of their produce in the salads they prepare for lunch. Literacy, Maths, Science, Life Skills and communication in action!

At this time of the year it is my pleasure to read the drafts of all reports that are sent out to our State Wide Service sites and also all of the Portfolios that are an illustrated record of achievement of our enrolled learners. Each report is a record of learning and achievement. It is evident that all of the enrolled learners have progressed this year. The teachers have planned and designed curriculum activities which are engaging and challenging for each learner.

The Governing Council is organising the lunch after our End of Year Assembly next Wednesday morning. Invitations and details about ordering lunch have been sent home this week. It is a very happy occasion where the learners are able to share their school activities with their friends and families. Krystyna leads the planning and preparation of this Assembly and it is a highlight of the term.

The theme for this Newsletter is Becoming … something with which we can all identify.

Alison McWilliams
Principal
ORANGE CIRCLES
The learners in Orange Circles have been enjoying trying new foods this term. We have prepared stir fry chicken and vegetables, chocolate cake, choc coconut slice, mango smoothies and melted cheese on crumpets. The learners have been involved in purchasing the ingredients, preparing the ingredients, cooking and eating.

Karen, Bruna, Mel & Sarah

GREEN TRIANGLES
We are officially over half way through the term, and it is moving along so quickly. The weather is warming up and we like to keep cool by providing opportunities for the learners to experience and enjoy water play, including using the water trays and filling up the outdoor bowls.

Swimming lessons will continue for the remainder of the school term for the non-ambulant learners of the school, and for the ambulant learners, ‘swimming block’ lessons at Marion Pool begin next week and will continue daily during Weeks 7 and 8. Just a reminder to please name all of your child’s belongings to avoid any confusion.

The Green Triangles and Yellow Squares learners have been busy practising for our assembly item, and we hope to see as many parents/grandparents/friends as possible on Wednesday November 30 (Week 7).

Rachel, Jess and Bruna

We are also working on our conversational skills and building up friendships.

It was lovely to see some of the KELC learners (and staff) at school last week, enjoying the many resources the school has to offer, including the orientation and mobility area. As part of his regular literacy sessions, Shaun ‘wrote a letter’ on the Brailletto Jenny, Kay and the KELC learners, telling them it was nice to have them visit the school. Jenny and Kay shared his letter with all the kindergarten children, and wrote a letter back to Shaun, which was brailled for him. This was a lovely spontaneous activity which helped develop awareness of others.
PURPLE STARS

Here we are already over the halfway mark of term four! Amazing!! It seems as though this whole year has just flown by. Although we are over the halfway mark and nearing the end of the term the learners in the Purple Stars are continuing to work very hard during class time.

As the theme for this term is Becoming, the Purple Stars have decided to focus on ‘Becoming Movie Stars’. Filming has begun for our class movie of Hattie and the Fox.

The learners have enjoyed listening to the story and analysing various parts of the story. The next step in putting together our movie was choosing what characters each of the learners wanted to be. Next as a class we created the scenery and some props to be used in the movie. Finally we put together some costumes.

The learners have taken this very seriously and have even memorized their parts.

Filmimg has officially commenced and whilst some learners are out the front of the class, the other learners are practising their audience listening skills and are taking turns directing. This is a wonderful class project and it is fantastic seeing the learners working as a team and enjoying time together in the classroom.

Beccy, Hayley and Elisha

YELLOW SQUARES

Now that we are beginning to look back over what we have achieved as a class in 2011, we would like to share what we believe have been our most important achievements of the year.

Becoming Communicators
In the Yellow Squares class Zane, Logan and Jess have all improved their Auslan signing. We are all much better at communicating with each other now and we experience less frustration as a result. Marina has been a very important part of our learning, so we thank her for her patience with us! Angus is also communicating well both with and without his switch and is enjoying more social conversations with peers and adults.

I am very proud of the effort that the learners have put into this project and we all look forward to viewing the end product. What a great way to spend the remaining weeks of Term 4, 2011!
Becoming Independent
Daily routines such as cleaning up after lunch and packing schoolbags ready for home are now automatic and don’t encroach on our important learning time. Zane and Logan are also willing to help Angus out with his routines. Angus has shown us that he can drink from his bottle on his own and he has become a little more adventurous in his exploration of unfamiliar objects.

Becoming Friends
We have been really working on our social skills this year. We try to help each other out and talk directly to one another. We are supported to play with other children in the yard. We have been working on an assembly item with the Green Triangles class and some lovely relationships are developing between learners. Angus and Angela have a particularly special friendship and enjoy their outside time together.

Becoming Literate
Our greatest academic achievement this year has certainly resulted from our focus on literacy. Reading, sight words, writing and alphabet knowledge have all improved. We have become a group of learners who read for our own enjoyment or listen attentively to stories. We are proud of our achievements and love to share them with other people. Feel free to come and read a story with us some time!

Jess and Marina

KILPARRIN EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) builds upon the importance of BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING.

Our focus for this newsletter is the idea of Becoming Learners. ‘Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age.’ (EYLF)

At Kelc this term we are focusing on each child ‘becoming a learner’, and it is wonderful to watch the children gradually adapt to new activities and different environments.

Dylan and Nasser are preparing to transition to school at some point during Term 1 next year, so we had a visit to Kilparrin school to experience a school environment.

Madi has tried a number of new experiences since coming to preschool, such as jelly play and music group. She accepts support to try new things, and shows engagement and enjoyment.

We needed to cope with school bells and a very different indoor and outdoor environment, and both boys were calm and happy amidst the new experiences. It shows that they are developing greater awareness of their world and resilience when things change.
We plan each preschool day in a way that values the here and now as well as anticipating the next developmental stage with excitement.

We are getting better with listening, picking up and playing the rhythm sticks or tambourines to particular sections of the songs.

We will present class items and musical items related to the theme *Becoming* and *Christmas* during the end of year special assembly on Wednesday 30 November.

All parents, caregivers and friends are welcome. Krystyna & Christina
Music Team

Term 4 is flying by already and in music time we have been focusing on becoming good listeners, singers and instrument players. We are practising the various songs we have learnt throughout the year improving the pronunciation, dynamics and melody.

During singing we regularly use the microphone which encourages learners to use their voices and improve articulation of some more complicated words.

Currently, we know that the best outcomes for all students can be achieved by teaching with a balanced approach to literacy. A balanced approach recognizes that both “whole language” and “phonics” approaches to literacy make an important contribution and that some students learn better with one approach than the other. However, a balanced approach recognizes that in a typical classroom we need to teach ALL aspects of literacy instruction so that all children can learn. This is particularly important for students with disabilities who may need explicit instruction and more repetition in some areas to make progress.

Use of a balanced approach to literacy instruction is made more valid by the use of good assessment. The assessment informs us what the area of greatest weakness is for each student – and can then further help us teach literacy better, making sure that each individual gets the best possible instruction for their specific needs. For example, if a student is struggling to hear sounds and syllables in speech (an important literacy skill known as
phonological awareness) then we need to provide extra instruction in this area.

The Four Blocks Approach to literacy instruction (Refer to www.four-blocks.com) has a strong history of being used successfully with students of all abilities for successful literacy instruction. It is, of course, a balanced approach to literacy instruction. The Four Blocks are Guided Reading, Self Selected Reading, Writing and Working with Words – and each of these is taught each day.

Guided Reading is the block where the teacher introduces the class to a range of literacy materials and teaches them how to be strategic about reading them. All reading is done with a purpose – and teachers are specific about the purpose each day so that students can learn the most from each text.

Self Selected Reading is the block where students learn to be independent and apply the literacy skills they learn in the other three blocks. For some students they might need help from technology to be independent in this block.

The Writing block is very important – for each student we need to provide them with a way of writing and allow them to write every day. It’s very important that this happens as without writing, reading doesn’t improve.

The final block, Working with Words, is where we teach students to recognize high frequency words and also how to decode and recode words that they aren’t familiar with.

During my next visit to Kilparrin, I will be completing the assessments on all the students and also providing a workshop for the teaching staff on using the Four Blocks approach. It is also quite exciting as there is a good history of this approach being used with

students who are deaf blind by the Centre for Literacy and Disability Studies in the US.

I look forward to working more with everyone at Kilparrin – especially the wonderful students.

Jane Farrall
BAppSci (SpPath), MSpEd, CPSP
Speech Pathologist
AAC Support Services Manager
Spectronics

On Wednesday 9 November 2011 a parent workshop was held at Kilparrin. The focus of the presentation was Siblings of Children with Disabilities.

The attached handout, Sibling Information for Parents, is provided for families who were unable to attend on the day.

November 2011

This edition includes a feature about children and pets, the ins-and-outs of audio description and some great links to information, Enjoy!

A Mum’s Eye View of Pets for Blind Children

Contributor: Julie Chaplin

I have always had pets as an integral part of my life. As a blind child I enjoyed the same sorts of special times with animals that my young sighted children now enjoy. Over time I have also grown to appreciate the sense of achievement that all children can gain from the responsibility of looking after their pets on a daily basis. I hope that my experience will help to guide you when considering animal additions to your family.

Dogs

I grew up with dogs and have had dog guides since leaving home. It's important to point out that the choice of a suitable pet is not solely about breed. My most suitable and unsuitable family pets were labradors - very, very different natured labradors.

Lydia was enthusiastic and packed with personality. She loved to rush around, wildly wagging her whole rear end, preferably with a sock in her mouth. She was a fantastic companion through the hustle and bustle of uni life - nothing fazed her and we had wonderful adventures. However, when we had our first baby, I chose to re-home Lydia, then aged 12, to live on acreage with my parents. I didn't want the worry that she'd accidentally injure my baby during one of her frolics. Also, at the end of long and no doubt exhausting days I had seen her quietly growl at someone who disturbed her rest time. She was a fantastic dog, but not an ideal pet for young inquisitive children.

Heather, a childhood pet, was also not suited to the often intense attention of little ones. She was very timid and would run and hide with my parents. I didn't want the worry that she'd accidentally injure my baby during one of her frolics. Also, at the end of long and no doubt exhausting days I had seen her quietly growl at someone who disturbed her rest time. She was a fantastic dog, but not an ideal pet for young inquisitive children.

Wags (named in the pre-Wiggles era) was a dream family pet. He was quiet and well-trained, yet full of personality. He was clever, loyal and loved all the attention we could lavish on him. I remember taking him for rides in the wheelbarrow, swimming with him at the beach and cuddling him in our tent. As I grew, the job of feeding him fell to me. Over time I taught him to find the food bowls and bring them to me. In fact he became so competent that he would carry his bowl around all day, just in case of an early meal. In the future I want to re-home Wags to a family who will provide him with the attention and care he deserves.

Cats

All of our cats have come from animal rescue agencies. Our criteria for a pet feline has always been foremost a cat who is friendly and
happy to be handled. To this end, we have taken the whole family, including dog guides, to meet potential adoptees. We look for cats that approach us and stay calm when passed between the children. Of course nearly all cats will scratch as a final resort, but good-natured cats have helped our children learn to be gentle, playful and respectful. In our house, a collar with a bell is essential for tracking animals. Although dry food is available all day, meat is only fed at night. This ensures that cats are keen to come when called!

**Birds**

My first pet birds were my gorgeous bantam hens. My grandmother’s poor, pampered chooks walked with me on leads and harnesses, were wheeled in carts or carried on long walks in specially made baskets. They were friendly, yet hardy, and have been a wonderful choice for my two little boys who have continued pampering with pram rides and snuggling their feathery friends in towels.

However, a negative bantam experience has shaped one of my strongest animal resolutions. When I was about ten, I was kneeling in the cage cooing to my beloved Toska when a bantam rooster flew up and attacked my face. I didn't see it coming and didn't have a chance at defence. The scratches were nothing compared to the shock. Now, we have unintentionally acquired a rooster that grew from a supposed "hen" chick. He is a silly but lovable little bird who amuses us all with his brainless antics. Even so, at any sign of aggression he will be re-homed to greener pastures. Safety is paramount.

In my teens I had Burtle the budgie as a pet. He was given to me as a chick to feel for signs that an animal may be unhappy or unwell. - At least initially, set up an enclosed space that makes it easy for children to catch and track their pet. This will increase confidence and independence.

- Encourage children to handle and even train their pet. Teach them to be heard by everyone.

**Some Final Tips**

- Choose your animal wisely. Find an animal with a stable and friendly temperament, one that is happy to be handled and occasionally mishandled. Some animals are tamer if raised from infancy, others are more manageable if acquired when older.

- Set up the environment to encourage children to learn to care for their pet. We keep food in bins near where animals are fed, using various scoops to measure the correct amounts. Children can learn a system for wiping, bagging, sweeping, raking or shovelling up messes. Hands (perhaps from inside a plastic bag) or feet give lots of information about what is happening, and can easily be cleaned with a decent dose of antiseptic soap.

**What is Audio Description?**

Audio description (AD) is a process that allows the visual elements of a movie, DVD, TV show or performance to be described audibly during natural pauses in dialogue. Descriptions of visual elements can include scenery, settings, actions, facial expressions and costumes. Audio description can be either closed or open - Closed AD allows a person to listen in through headphones in a private manner while still allowing their sighted peers access to the same content without description, while Open AD allows the description to be heard by everyone.

BCA has been lobbying for a technical trial of audio description on television on ABC1. In addition, we have worked very closely with the four major cinema chains (Greater Union, Hoyts, Village and Readings) to ensure that more cinemas with audio description continue to be rolled out across Australia. To find out where your nearest cinema with AD is located, visit www.yourlocalcinema.com.au

So why all the fuss? AD means that young children and people of all ages who are blind or vision impaired can share the same experiences as their friends and family. This can also have positive implications for children’s education in the future – with the greater availability of AD, there is more incentive to ensure that educational audio visual material is accessible!

**AD ideas to keep big and little kids happy**

Trying to figure out how to keep you and your family entertained? There are many animated audio described DVDs that you can rent or purchase at any local DVD store, such as Brother Bear, Chicken Little, Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs, Coraline, Despicable Me, Diary of a Wimpy Kid 1 and 2, Fantastic Mr Fox, How to Train Your Dragon, Ice Age 3, The Incredibles, Jungle Book 2, Shrek Forever After, Simpsons Movie, Wall-E and much more!! To check out what’s available visit www.mediaaccess.org.au/dvds/dvd _database and select by category which includes action, drama, family, romantic comedies, thrillers and much more!

**Children’s Audio Theatre**

The Children’s Audio Theatre is an initiative of the Kiama’s Lions Club who saw a need for entertainment that is accessible to children who are blind or vision impaired.

The fully dramatised CDs with music and sound effects include The Adventures of Pinocchio, The Story of Dr Dolittle, The Adventures of Blinky Bill and Five Short Stories which includes Beauty and the Beast, Hansel and Gretel and more. CDs can be purchased for $14.95 per CD plus postage, with additional resources available to support each recording on their website at no additional cost. The CDs are currently being
promoted by Vision Australia and are being played on many community radio and RPH stations in every state in Australia. Want to learn more? Visit www.childrens-audio-theatre.org.au

FREE Extra Large Print Calendars
Guide Dogs NSW/ACT would like to offer all people with a vision impairment who are members of Blind Citizens Australia and are living in NSW or the ACT a free 2012 extra large print calendar. Please contact Guide Dogs on 02 9412 9300 to request your free calendar

Get the word out!
Do you know of a parent who should be receiving Parent News?
To receive this Newsletter via email contact us on bca@bca.org.au.

Address Details
Ross House, Level 3, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne Vic 3000
Phone: 1800 033 660
Fax: (03) 9650 3200
Email: bca@bca.org.au

Information from RNIB
Go to: http://www.rnib.org.uk/earlyyearslearning for some timely information for children with vision impairment. The early years learning site has advice on helping your child learn and links to resources for you to download. There is also a section on advice on toys – useful reading prior to Christmas shopping.

Helping your child learn
This section suggests how to stimulate your child's curiosity and encourage them to explore, move and learn.

All children develop at their own pace, whether or not they are blind or partially sighted. However, young children with sight problems may need you to help them make sense of the world around them to awaken their interest in people, toys and objects.

Resources to download
You will find themed resources across this section and to get you started why not download the following articles by specialists who have worked with blind and partially sighted children.

- Infant massage for you and your child
- Using play, movement and touch to help your child learn
- An introduction to Treasure Baskets
- Sensory boxes
- A charter for families of young children

Advice on toys
Find out more about selecting toys for your child with our toys and play guide for children who are blind and partially sighted.

We've teamed up with The British Toy & Hobby Association (BTHA) to produce a leaflet providing information on how to choose the right toys, creating a play environment, growing through different types of play and top tips for extending your child's play environment.

Readers of Insight magazine can also enjoy our regular toys and play column which features toys for children at different ages, stages of development and with different interests.
For more toy ideas visit the RNIB shop.
Contact: cypf@rnib.org.uk

Free Recipe Book

CITRUS COLESLAW

10 minutes preparation
6 serves of vegies in this recipe
Serves 4.

Ingredients
1 orange
3 cups cabbage, shredded
2 spring onions, sliced
1 small green capsicum, seeded and sliced

Dressing
1 tablespoon vinegar
1 tablespoon orange juice
2 tablespoons olive oil

Method
Grate the orange rind and set aside. Peel and slice orange in to segments or rings.
Combine orange with cabbage, spring onions and capsicum in a serving bowl.
Mix dressing ingredients in a separate bowl and add orange rind. Pour over salad and mix well.

Variation
Use pink grapefruit instead of orange.
Add sliced kiwi fruit or grated carrot.

For a creamy, low-fat dressing, mix ¼ cup low-fat natural yogurt, ¼ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise, juice of ½ lemon and 1 teaspoon wholegrain or French mustard.

www.gofor2and5.com.au