Welcome to the first edition of the E4Kids Express

2010 has been such an exciting year to see the study come to life as we begin working with children, families and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. Over 2,400 children are now in the study with approximately 1,300 from Melbourne and Shepparton in Victoria and 1,100 from Brisbane and Mt Isa in Queensland. These children attend over 200 services representing family day care, long day care, occasional care and kindergarten settings.

The E4Kids study is a landmark study in Australia that will provide essential knowledge about the contribution of ECEC services to children’s learning, health and social development. Once again, welcome to the E4Kids study and we look forward to working with you over the coming years.

Professor Collette Tayler, Professor Karen Thorpe and the E4Kids Team

The story so far...
Between April and June this year the E4Kids team have visited each service in the study to work one on one with participating children. Parents have also recently been sent surveys to be completed.

In the second half of this year we have continued to work with services, observing children’s routines in their everyday environment.

We are especially grateful to service directors and staff for being so welcoming and helpful when our teams have visited. All services participating in the E4Kids study will be receiving a voucher to purchase books, puzzles and other educational materials.

E4Kids Surveys for Parents/Caregivers
A huge thank you to parents and caregivers from our E4Kids families who have completed our survey over the past few months. We understand your time is precious and we really appreciate your valuable survey contributions. Ten prizes, each worth $250, for parents/caregivers who have completed the survey will be drawn and announced in our next newsletter.

Our new website is coming soon...
www.e4kids.org.au

Take a look for further information on the E4Kids study, fun stuff for kids and find links to sites of interest to parents and families.

Let us know if your child is moving to a new service next year or any of your personal details have changed.

Email E4Kids at: e4-kids@unimelb.edu.au
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Playdough can be heaps of fun for children and helps in their growth and development.

Why is playdough so good for children?
Playing with playdough helps to strengthen little fingers, hands and wrists. It can become anything - food, animals, any shape at all - and will fuel your child's imagination!

Playdough helps children develop their self-esteem as they gain mastery over their environment. It is a great release for tension. Playdough can be squeezed, punched and poked. Talking with children about what they are creating helps stimulate maths, science and language related concepts.

Home made playdough is much cheaper than the store bought variety and can be stored in an ice cream container. Best not to store in the fridge as it can become sweaty and sticky.

You can add things to use with playdough such as icy pole sticks, patty pans, rolling pin and cookie cutters. Watch your child’s play, be part of it yourself and add things as your child and their imagination starts to direct their play.

Playdough Recipe

Ingredients
- 1 cup plain flour
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1 cup water with food colouring added of your choice
- 1 tbl Cream of Tartar
- 1 tbl Oil

Method
1. Sift flour, salt and cream of tartar into a medium sized saucepan.
2. Make a well in the centre and pour in oil, mix.
3. Gradually pour in water
4. Heat slowly, stirring continuously, until thick. You’ll know when it’s done and lasts for ages!

Who am I
I am 33 years old. I am a mum with two great young kids, one boy (11) and one girl (13). I came to Australia as a refugee from Europe and have lived here for the past 10 years and have made Melbourne my home. I am now completing a PhD in psychology and working as a researcher on the E4Kids study.

What I like about this job
I think that this project is very important and can help provide our children with better child care plus I get to work with very cute and smart little people.

My favourite children's book
My kids and I still love reading to each other even now. When they were very little their favourites were The Ugly Duckling and The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Andersen. Memories of those times I cherish a lot even today.