



## LITERACY SKILLS

Literacy is being able to read, write, listen, speak and create texts in ways that allow us to communicate well with others. Research has shown that children whose parents and carers read to them when they are young learn to speak, read and write more easily.

Reading books, sharing stories, talking and singing every day helps your child's development in many ways. Reading and storytelling can:

- ♥ help your child get to know sounds, words and language, and develop early literacy skills
- ♥ introduce your child to the value of books and stories
- ♥ spark your child's imagination and curiosity
- ♥ promote your child's brain development and ability to focus and concentrate
- ♥ help your child build social, communication and emotional skills
- ♥ help your child learn about the world, their own culture and other cultures.

The Australian author Mem Fox says if families read 3 books a day to your child from birth, they would have heard around 5000 stories by the time they reach the age of five. Can you imagine the world they will learn about and wealth of language they will have encountered? Wow!

### How can you help your child develop their literacy skills?

You know your child best. Be guided by their interests. If they are mad about trains, read books about trains. If they are spending their days hunting for fairies, read books about fairies.

- ♥ All children love predictable books, books that have a pattern, a predictable plot or lots of repetition. These books are a great choice for preschoolers as they can guess what is going to happen next and start 'reading' them to you.
- ♥ Hearing and using rhyme is a fun way of making sounds, words and stories memorable. Preschoolers love to chant along and participate in the story.
- ♥ Other characteristics of favourite books for 4 and 5 year olds include humour, suspense, and imagination. If you are still stuck then try well-loved, classic books that stand the test of time, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', 'Who Sank the Boat?' or 'Possum Magic'.

Remember to check your local library for Storytime sessions that will introduce new stories to your child as well as incorporate fun craft sessions, all of which will support your child's growing literacy skills.



## April in Review 2024

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## Our Preschool Programme in Review

**Sweetpeas and Bluebells:** April has brought lots of fun learning opportunities for the Sweetpeas and Bluebells groups. At the start of the month we investigated how the human body works, starting with our five senses. This involved many hands on learning experiences including animal sounds guessing games, taste tasting and exploring our sensory garden. We extended this interest by learning about the human body the following week, where the children got to use an interactive app on the iPad to explore parts of the body and learn about their functions. The Sweetpeas and Bluebells are starting to understand the expectations at group times and Discovery group is a great opportunity to practice these skills within a smaller group. Some of the skills required during group times include concentrating for extended periods, raising their hand before asking a question and taking turns when talking in groups. The Sweetpeas and Bluebells also got to engage in their first holiday programme which was so much fun! The children's engagement during this programme was fantastic, and we observed children bonding over their matching dress-ups, crazy hair and cozy pj's.

**Schoolies:** As the children work towards cognitive goals including developing their literacy and numeracy skills, Maddie and I are continuously setting up play-based learning experiences that support these skills. This includes but is not limited to, name writing activities, letter, number and shape recognition games and puzzles, opportunities for counting during transitions and songs and exposure to patterns such as threading with beads. We are so proud of our children and their artistic abilities, regularly observing the Schoolies displaying their creativity at the drawing table. We often use this as an opportunity for the children to continue to master their name writing as well as expose the children to different numbers and letters of their interest, building their understanding of the relationships between oral, written and visual representations. Our Letterland programme strongly supports the children's understanding of the connections between letters and sounds and sounds to words. Our recent T word challenge, not only developed the children's phonemic awareness but their vocabulary with /t/ words. Popular board games such as Spotty Dogs and Insey Winsey Spider further develop the children's numeracy skills as they are encouraged to count through one-to-one correspondence, develop skills such as subitising and identify shapes. We look forward to continuing to develop the children's literacy and numeracy skills, allowing them to be confident and involved learners.



# The 5 Senses Week

1/4/24



This month we explored our 5 senses through a wide variety of hands on experiences and learning activities. The outside world shapes children's development through experiences that they have, which include using their five senses—hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. Drawing a child's attention to the five senses and discussing them increases their understanding and communication about the world around us.

We spent the week looking closely at what each of the senses allows us to do. We put our senses to work when participating in 'guess the sound' games, tasting different foods while being blindfolded, using our touch sense to explore "what's in the box" and many more fun activities. The children were observed applying their knowledge and skills into play and through conversations during meal times.



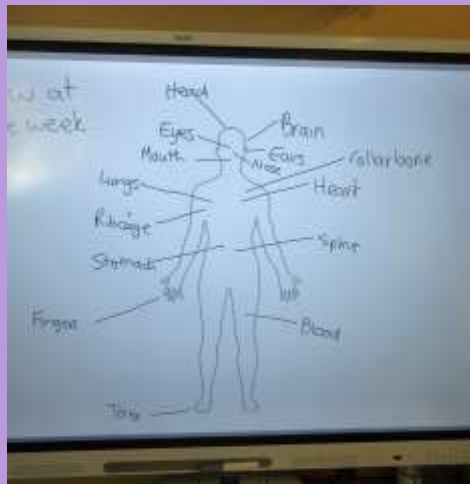
# Human Body Week

8/4/24

Stemming from the children's interest around their five senses we further explored the Human Body.

The children posed a variety of questions this week which we could use to guide their learning. This included "How does the blood move through our brain?" and "Why does our heart beat faster when we exercise?"

The children were involved in a variety of physical experiences that encouraged them to learn about how different parts of the body work e.g. checking the difference in our heart rate after exercise and whilst being still through meditation. We were able to use technology this week through an interactive app (The Human Body App) to explore different parts of the body and learn about what their functions are. The children could click on a specific part of the body to see how it works through visuals.



# APRIL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

What a great first Holiday Programme of the year we had. The children were such enthusiastic participants in each of the themed days. Some highlights included;

**Colour Run Day**—where you could not wipe the smiles off the children's faces as they navigated their way around the playground getting showered with coloured powder.

**Hot Wheels Day**—a first for the preschool, this day saw the children experiment with problem solving, speed and measurement.

**Mixed Up Day**—The children came into a mixed up room and loved being able to be teachers for the day, transferring their existing knowledge to take on this role.

**Dress Up Day** - where we could transform into different characters throughout the day.

**Crazy Hair Day**— Our resident hairdressers added colour, extensions and funky styles to our hair.

**A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR FAMILY VOLUNTEERS WHO HELPED US DURING THE HOLIDAY PROGRAMME :)**



# APRIL HOLIDAY PROGRAMME





# Bush To Bowl Incursion

<https://bushtobowl.com/>

Tuesday 30th April

Today we had a special visit from Cooper from Bush to Bowl, who taught us about the many wonderful uses of bush tucker and how it is good for our bodies. We started the incursion by smelling a range of different plants including lemon, cinnamon and aniseed myrtle and native oregano and thyme. We closely observed the pig face plant and discovered that it grows at the beach and is good for mozzie bites. We were then introduced to the sandpaper fig, which is great for sanding timber. The children got to work, sourcing a wooden block to sand using the leaves. It was then time to get cooking! The children enjoyed mixing a blend of sultanas and dates, coconut and lemon myrtle together to then mould the mixture into a protein ball. A few mixed reactions to the sweet taste, however the educators loved it! Thank you Cooper for allowing us to further explore Indigenous peoples culture and traditions, including the use of native plants and animals as bush tucker. We look forward to continuing to incorporate bush tucker into our cooking! <https://bushtobowl.com/>



# Little Endeavours with Jo



So many great days during the holiday programme. These are the sessions that Little Endeavours was involved in.

Banana and Oat Cookies (Cooking Day) – When baking the preschoolers are involved in checking the items we need, making sure the weights and measurements are correct, learning to crack eggs, following the recipe and working as a team. So many different skills are needed and there is always high engagement of all the children.



Crowns and Masks (Dress Up Day) – Lots of creativity was shown as we made accessories for Dress Up Day. Fine motor skills were needed to colour and decorate the crowns and masks, and the preschoolers engaged in enjoyable verbal interactions as they worked as they discussed what they were wearing and how they were decorating their accessories.





# Little Endeavours with Jo

Recycled Vehicles (Hot Wheels Day) – With so many wonderful items donated and collected by staff and families there was a lot to choose from when the children designed and made their vehicles on Hot Wheels Day. They were all fabulous creations with the children noting what products came in the containers, and what the wheels and people were made from. We discussed recycling and how we can help create less rubbish.



Sugar Scrub (Pamper Day) – We made a Sugar Scrub to either use or give to someone we know. The children were enthusiastic and curious about how sugar and oil would mix together to make something we can use, and how we use a scrub. Decisions had to be made about what colour to make the scrub and what essential oil to use to add scent. When smelling the oils the children enjoyed guessing what each oil reminded them of.





# Phonemic Awareness Programme

During the month of April, the Schoolies have been learning about the focus sound /t/ as well as revising the sounds from Term 1. The children have been engaged in a variety of songs, stories, activities and craft experiences with the Letterland character Talking Tess.

The children enjoyed talking with Talking Tess this fortnight, as they discovered 72 /t/ words! This was a personal best for all Schoolie groups. We continued to add /t/ words to the whiteboard every time a child discovered a new word, developing the children's phonemic awareness and vocabulary. The children also made telescopes to further promote the /t/ sound as well as regular brain breaks where the children needed to quickly find a partner to form the letter T using their bodies. Lastly, we continued to practise our letter formation of the letter T through writing in the air and on paper.



During our revision weeks, the children have the opportunity to revise the sounds we have previously explored as well as choose from our basics programme the letters that they are interested in knowing more about. We incorporated ICT into our learning through educational games such as ABCYA to further consolidate our knowledge as well as played games such as the coloured hoops game where the children needed to find the letter, name the letter, say the sound and the Letterland character, transferring what they had learnt from Term 1.



# Mini Moves



This month the children have been provided with lots of opportunities to revise the mini move skills we have learnt so far this year which have been running, jumping, overarm throwing and underarm throwing. This has allowed them to refine their skills and incorporate them into outdoor play. Some highlights of the mini move program this month have been:

- ♥ We tried playing 'piggy in the middle' but decided that it was more fun just to pass the ball in a circle. We practiced controlling the speed and direction of the ball when throwing, to make it easier for the other person to catch it.
- ♥ Free play with the balls has been a big hit, with the balls and basketball hoop being available to the children at all times (weather permitting). This has also provided lots of opportunities for the children to practice sharing and turn-taking and they can often be overheard saying phrases such as "Ok, you go first, then me".
- ♥ As always, running games have been a favourite which allows the children to enhance their running skill and overall gross motor control. They also showcase their imaginations through these games by incorporating role play or fantasy elements into their play such as Pokémon, dinosaurs and fairies. Our Colour Run Day was also a great opportunity to showcase this skill.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## A successful month

As part of our sustainable program, we are continually trying to think of new ways to be sustainable and use best practises throughout our centre. This month we have introduced Biodegradable garbage bags that are now being used to reduce the amount of plastic waste and 'Earth first paper' which is 100% recycled paper that the children are using for crafts, colouring print outs and more.

A huge thank you to all families who have contributed recycled cardboard boxes for our holiday program crafts and for the donations of all easter egg wrappers.

### ~ The Odd Bunch ~

Our preschool now proudly supports Woolies Odd Bunch campaign. As part of our weekly Woolies order, we now order fruits and vegetables from the odd bunch and serve it for afternoon tea. The Odd Bunch allows us to buy the fruit and vegetables that may otherwise be rejected or thrown away and added to landfill.





## ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO TRY NEW FOODS AND MANAGING FUSSY EATERS

Feeding young children can be challenging as they often have small appetites and very definite likes and dislikes.

As a parent, it can be concerning and frustrating when your child refuses to try new foods or to eat what you have provided.

### Tips to encourage new foods and manage fussy eating

#### Setting the scene

- A predictable routine for meal and snack times helps your child to know when to expect food. This can help children develop good eating habits.
- Avoid letting your child graze throughout the day, as this makes it harder for them to become a better eater.
- Eat together as a family wherever possible. Try to keep meal times relaxed and calm.
- Remove distractions such as toys, games and television during meal and snack times so your child can focus on the task of eating.
- Offer all children the same family foods and try to avoid preparing separate meals for different family members.
- Set a good example by eating and enjoying a range of healthy foods yourself. Children learn to be good eaters by watching how other people eat and the foods they choose.

#### Sparking your child's interest in trying new foods

- Offer your child a new food regularly. Children may need to try a new food many times before liking or accepting it. Don't give up or say "they don't like it" after just a few tries.
- Encourage your child to explore new foods. Looking, touching and smelling a new food helps children learn about it and be more prepared to taste it. Talk about the food with your child.

- Involve your child in choosing new foods when you are shopping.
- Children love to help with food preparation tasks such as pouring, stirring, spreading, dipping and shaking. Children who are actively involved in preparing food are more likely to try that food.
- Growing vegetables and fruit is a fun way to help children learn where food comes from. Try growing cherry tomatoes, herbs, beans or strawberry plants in pots or in the garden.
- Serve only a small amount of the new food on their plate so it doesn't overwhelm your child. Serve alongside foods they already like eating and are familiar with.
- Make meals and snacks look appealing by using different coloured foods, interesting shapes and textures.
- Try varying the way new foods are prepared. Some children prefer cold, crunchy foods while others enjoy cooked. This can change over time.
- Give your child a choice of healthy food – offer a small range of healthy foods eg in the middle of the table, and allow your child to choose what s/he wants to eat.
- Congratulate your child when s/he tries something new even if it's just a small mouthful. Their efforts to learn about food by touching, smelling or tasting it are also important to acknowledge.



## Fact Sheet

# ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO TRY NEW FOODS AND MANAGING FUSSY EATERS CONT.



### Don't force the issue

- Meal times shouldn't feel like a battleground. Your child will associate eating with feeling stressed and upset if mealtimes are always a battle. This only makes the situation worse and can have lasting effects.
- It's best not to push your child to eat if s/he is not hungry or say they've had enough.
- Don't insist that your child eats everything on their plate. Children need to learn to respond to their body's natural signals of fullness and hunger in order to develop healthy eating habits and be able to control their food intake. It is preferable to serve a smaller amount and allow your child to ask for more if they are still hungry.
- Try not to use food as a bribe. For example, don't say 'No ice-cream unless you eat your broccoli.' This just makes the ice-cream more desirable and the broccoli even less desirable! Try not to reward good behaviour with food treats.

### What if my child refuses to eat?

- Keep calm and don't make a fuss if your child is refusing foods. Unless ill, children won't voluntarily starve themselves. If your child is healthy and energetic, s/he is eating enough.
- Set some ground rules and make sure your child knows what will happen if s/he doesn't eat the meal or snack provided. Children feel more secure when they know what to expect. One approach is to allow a certain time for snacks (10 – 20 minutes) and meal times (20 – 30 minutes). If the food is not eaten within this time period, allow your child to leave the table. Safely store the uneaten food covered and in the refrigerator. If they come back soon after

and declare they are still hungry, offer it one more time. If it's not wanted, then it will not hurt them to wait until the next meal or snack time.

- Don't be tempted to think that "something is better than nothing". If the meal is refused or you don't think they've eaten enough, don't offer extra milk, toast or 'sometimes' foods such as lollies, fruit juice, packet snacks or biscuits. Your child will quickly learn to refuse the healthy meals and snacks knowing s/he will be rewarded later on with foods s/he prefers. You will be left feeling upset that another meal or snack has gone untouched. Your child can wait until the next meal or snack time and then offer healthy food again. Remind yourself that you are teaching them how to be a better eater by doing this.
- Think about your child's food intake over the week rather than worrying about whether they've eaten enough at this meal or on this day. If you feel that overall, s/he is eating food from all of the food groups, then it is likely they are getting the nutrients needed. When the majority of foods offered to a child are healthy everyday foods, then their diet will be well balanced.
- If you are still concerned that your child is not eating enough, check how they are growing using the growth charts in your baby's Blue Book. Your doctor, Child and Family Health Nurse or Accredited Practising Dietitian can help you interpret the charts to see how your child is progressing.



Health

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Mother's Day Dinner—Wednesday 8th May**

**Thursday Schoolies Post Office excursion— 8th June**

**Walkathon Fundraiser for Hornsby Hospital—Week of  
17th June**

## May Birthdays

**A big Happy Birthday to all of our children and educators having a birthday this month! What a busy month!**

**Amelia—5 years**

**Lyla—4 year**

**Freddie—5 years**

**Efa—5 years**

**Brooks—5 years**

**Aubrie—4 years**

**Educator Tegan**



# Community Connections



## St Patrick's Catholic Primary School Asquith



# OPEN DAY

Thursday 9th May 2024



Meet our Principal, teachers, students, parents.



Learn about St Patrick's faith led approach, including specialised learning programs.



Visit our classrooms and learning spaces, play areas, the library, music room.



Gain a real sense of the St Patrick's School community.



**Scan to register**

9am-10:30am

5:30pm-7pm

Todd Vane-Tempest, Principal  
St Patrick's Catholic Primary  
School Asquith  
1 Royston Parade,  
Asquith  
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*Authentic, professional Catholic education,  
delivered with care and compassion*



# Community Connections

## Sydney 42nd Meccano exhibition

Sat 4th  
May 2024



**Educational!**

Family \$12 max  
Adults \$6  
Students \$2

Uniting Church cnr Pacific Hwy and Amaroo Ave, Mt Colah 10:00am to 4:30pm