

Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



a caring place to learn and grow



Remembering to be grateful for what we do have is what is going to keep up our resilience and get us through this tough time. On that note I wish to pass onto all our families and children a huge **thank you** from the team at Preschool for your patience, your understanding and the many, many ways you have supported the educators and the ongoing operation of the Preschool.

I would encourage you to read this article on the Care for Kids website. <https://www.careforkids.com.au/child-care-articles/article/516/small-but-powerful-steps-to-build-a-sense-of-gratitude>

It provides us with great food for thought about how we are viewing what is going on around us and how to engage an attitude of gratitude in our homes and with our children. Included are some great activities you can do with your children at home as well. Stay positive and your children will stay positive : let's all be thankful for what we do have.

We encourage you all to connect regularly with our facebook page as we will endeavour to post some great at home learning ideas to keep your child engaged at home. We have also included in this newsletter a new segment 'Home Learning' providing great ways to continue to support your child's development.

Again, **thank you** all so much for your ongoing support.

Annette



April 2020

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Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

Sweetpeas: The Sweetpeas have had many new challenges over the past few weeks and they have embraced these with enthusiasm. During our one-on-one developmental times we have been practicing fine motor skills, such as scissor manipulation and pencil grip by doing drawings and name tracing. The children have enjoyed these challenges and are determined to master these. We have been practicing cutting play dough and with a lot of concentration have done really well cutting along lines on paper. We will continue developing these skills through the year, particularly during craft experiences. These are new experiences for some children and are so important as these help develop small muscles in their hands, hand-eye co-ordination and bilateral co-ordination, using the two sides of the body for the same action. It can be quite challenging as they try to co-ordinate left and right hands to work together and to hold the scissors correctly without twisting hands. *'Every child can learn just not on the same day or the same way.'* - George Evans

Bluebells: The Bluebells have had another great month, developing friendships, working together to make awesome construction models and exploring preschool together. The Bluebells and Sweetpeas have also been developing their gross motor skills and we do this by participating in a fundamental movement skills experience each day. The fundamental movement skills are the basis for all physical activity we do in sports, dance, gymnastics etc so it is important that children develop these skills in early childhood to enable them to participate in such activities as they grow. So far this term we have been working on our jumping skills, hopping and running skills. Hopping is definitely a challenging skill to learn which we will continue to practice at preschool and you can help with this at home. Hopscotch is a great activity to develop hopping and this is fun to play with a sibling too. If you would like to know more about the fundamental movement skills, please speak to us

Schoolies: It has been wonderful to see the children develop such a strong interest in the topic 'pollution' with a strong focus on water pollution. It has been so wonderful to see them respond with such care and empathy towards the marine life and our environment by knowing the importance of picking up rubbish. We have introduced the slogan "**Take Three For the Sea**" to the children, meaning simply take 3 pieces of rubbish with you when you leave anywhere, and you have made a difference. At preschool we have set up an under the water play scene where the children were encouraged to use tweezers and pick up all the rubbish floating around with the animals. This activity has been a great visual representation for the children to see what it is like for the marine life to live amongst rubbish. This topic has been such a hit that we have had many parents coming in and informing us that their children have been talking about pollution at home and picking up rubbish around the community. It is wonderful to see our Schoolies transferring their knowledge from one setting to another and contributing to the world around them by showing such respect for our environment.



Open Day

If you know of any new families who would like the information pack from our Open Day please ask them to call us and we will send it out to them.



We are now on Facebook!



We encourage you all to follow our facebook page especially to get some great ideas of activities to do at home to support your child's development during this crazy time.

Please 'like and follow' our page where we will bring you Preschool community updates, helpful articles regarding early childhood development and some of the fun activities and learning experiences we enjoy during our busy days at Preschool.

Please take a look at a recent article posted on the [how to talk to your children about COVID -19](#) by Maggie Dent

Scholastic Book Club

Thank you for all the orders placed this month. These orders have been placed and should hopefully with us in the next week or so. If your child is not attending preschool just now, we will let you know when your order arrives so you can collect this.



How can parents encourage a love of gardening?

Children thrive on new information and experiences, so parents can introduce youngsters to the wonderful world of gardening by:



- Flipping through gardening books and magazines together, pointing out pictures, explaining interesting facts and answering your child's questions.
- Setting aside part of the garden, balcony or windowsill for children to grow something in, and encouraging young children to dig in the dirt, plant seeds, water plants and harvest produce.
- Make your own pots eg. from some old lego, a gum boot or old toy car.
- Explaining where food comes from, how plants grow and what creatures, like bees and worms get up to.
- Engaging with the family garden and growing plants that are interesting to children.



Remember to consider safety when gardening with children and give those hands a good wash afterwards.

Happy Growing

April Birthdays'

A big Happy Birthday to all of our children and teachers having a birthday this month.

Zoe—4 yrs

Daniel N.—5 yrs

Aubrey—4 yrs

Jessica—5yrs

Bodhi—4 yrs

James—4 yrs

Daniel F. —5 yrs



HOME LEARNING

Our Home Learning focus this month is on developing Fine Motor Skills

The development of fine motor skills are essential to enable a child to complete a variety of everyday tasks as well as supporting their academic and educational journey. Fine motor skills are required to learn to write, and cut, they are needed for the manipulation of construction, when manoeuvring puzzle pieces and required for self- help skills such as zipping, buttoning and tying shoelaces.

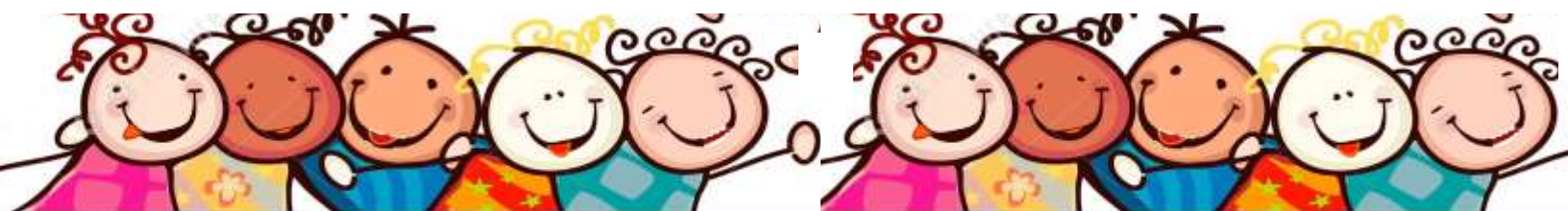
To support a child's educational development and independence skills, little hands need to develop dexterity and strength. Our educational programme provides a wide variety of learning opportunities to allow all our preschoolers' to further develop and strengthen these skills.

Below we have suggested a few great experiences and ideas that you can carry out at home to support your child's fine motor skills.

- Encourage your child to assist in the kitchen eg. spreading their own choice of spread on their toast or pouring the milk over their cereal.
- Encourage them to serve their own food during meal times by manipulating tongs.
- Provide hands on cooking experiences. Perhaps our Harmony Day Recipe book could provide you with some new recipes.
- Here are some other simple and delicious recipe that you may like to try. These recipes invite the children to spread, sprinkle and roll the various ingredients promoting their fine motor skills.
 - Vegemite and cheese scrolls- <https://www.taste.com.au/recipes/cheese-vegemite-scrolls/dd53d769-81fo-4521-a731-85546dc8ofoo>
 - Pizza scrolls- <https://www.taste.com.au/recipes/pizza-scrolls/3bbe4775-0326-41c3-9bda-269a398b864o>



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HOME LEARNING

Our Home Learning focus this month is on developing Fine Motor Skills

Arts and crafts are another fun way to promote fine motor skill development:

- Attempting jigsaw puzzles where they are manipulating objects; twisting, turning, placing and flipping pieces
- Provide an open ended drawing and craft station that is made up of a wide variety of materials eg. colouring pencils, texta's, crayons, scissors, glue, old magazines, recycled craft materials
- Threading experiences using pipe cleaners, string or ribbon. If you have no beads, raw pasta , cut up straws or buttons are other materials you could use.
- Tracing experiences where they are practising and further developing their pencil grasp. This is a skill that is particularly important to continue to support for our schoolie children. They could trace their hand, around natural objects from your backyard or cut out some shapes for them to trace.

Please note : If you would like your child's educator to provide you with a name card for your child that is in the appropriate NSW foundation style we are more than happy to produce one for you that we will send to you via email. Also, if you would like direction to support the correct pencil grip then please email Lara.

Using items you have lying around the house:

Bubble wrap: Provide your child with a sheet of bubble wrap and encourage them to pop the bubbles, challenging them by asking ... How many bubbles can you pop? Can you beat your score from next time?

Hole punch: Use a mini hole punch and propose the following and provide the following challenge....How many holes can you punch? Can you punch in a piece of tissue paper, card, or even leaves?

Play dough: is a great activity to further promote and strengthen little hands and further develop overall fine motor ability. Here is Adele's special play dough recipe:

Ingredients:

4 cups of plain flour
1 tin of cream of tartar
1 Cup salt
3 Cups of boiling water
(Approx)
½ Cup cooking oil
Food colouring

Method:

Mix dry ingredients
Add oil, water gradually and colouring. Add more water if needed. Combine to create play dough consistency.
Store in air tight container in fridge.

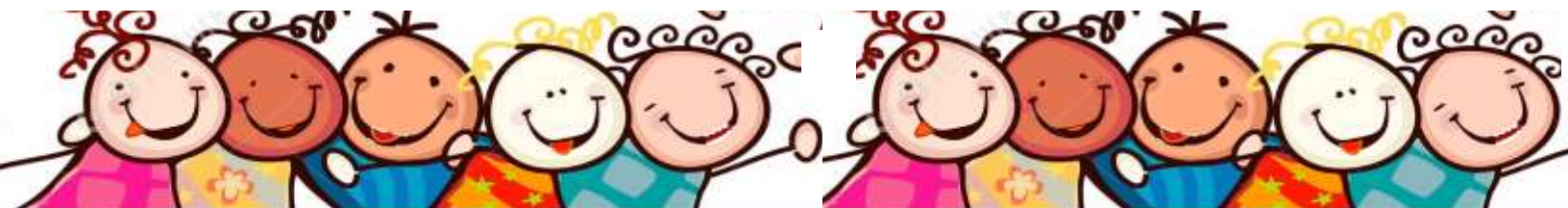




The children have shown such a strong interest in "Under the Sea" these past few weeks. They have been curious participants in their learning, guiding the educators and showing an ability to transfer and extend their knowledge.

The children have created their own fish, jellyfish, clams, crabs, seahorses and a large whale tail using recycled materials, old cd's and a variety of craft resources.

We have turned our upstairs area into an Under the Sea Project, where the children have used their creativity to create an inviting space that demonstrates their learning on this topic.



Learning about keeping ourselves healthy

Now more than ever we need to educate our children on the importance of hygienic practices. Here at Preschool we have been teaching the children how best to keep those germs away and ask you to continue to do the same at home.

- Further promoting the importance of handwashing. We have been using songs, books and visual aids to help further convey this message. You may hear your child count to 20 or sing "Happy Birthday" whilst handwashing at home.
- Educating the children on the correct handwashing technique – palms, top, fingers, thumbs, in between our fingers and nails.
- Coughing or sneezing into our elbows. Disposing of tissues immediately after use and then washing our hands.
- Keeping our hands away from our face and mouth.
- We have been providing hands on experiments for the children to show the effect that soap has in keeping those germs away. The pepper experiment is our current favourite and an easy one to do at home:



Place some water in a plate

Crack some pepper into the water (the pepper represents the germs)

Apply a small amount of soap to your finger tip

Place your finger in the water and watch the germs disperse



Phonemic Awareness Programme

During our phonemic awareness program the past few weeks, our Schoolies have been introduced to two more Letterland characters 'Clever Cat' and 'Bouncy Ben'. Some great ideas here to carry on at home too!



Clever Cat loves to sit by the Letterland castle, having a cup of cocoa whilst doing her crossword puzzle. She is such a clever cat she can fill in all the words before she has finished her cake. She knows how to count and cook carrots and cauliflower and can make custard and cake. If anyone in Letterland asks, "Who can help us with this problem?" the answer is usually; "Clever Cat can!"

The children loved participating in our 'C' sound scavenger hunt. A wide variety of fluoro cut out 'c' letters attached to an item that starts with the 'c' sound, e.g. camera and car, were hiding throughout the outdoor playground. All the children gathered on the blue seat where Cat reminded them what letter sound they needed to find. Once all the 'c' sound items had been located, the children were encouraged to sit in a circle, where together, they discovered where the 'c' sound items had been found and identified each individual item, focusing on producing a, 'c, c, c' sound for each one.

The children engaged in a group music experience called Copy Cat, where they took turns of sitting in the middle of the circle and carried out their own hand actions for everyone else to copy. This game was thoroughly enjoyed by many of the children as they eagerly waited for their turn to share their action and movement with their friends. This offered opportunity for the children to further develop their receptive skills through the use of nonverbal communication. This game was such a huge hit that it became a great transition experience.



Phonemic Awareness Programme



Bouncy Ben is a very happy bunny rabbit. He is always having fun with his brothers in their blue boat. Ben has a bouncy ball too and sometimes he balances it on his head, between his big brown ears. Bunnies love to bounce and Ben is the best bouncer in Letterland. He makes a special 'b...b...b...b' sound as he bounces around.

Bouncy Ben loves to get active and the children engaged in a number of physically active games whilst being able to practice the "b" sound. The children were given the opportunity to engage in a 'See The Sleeping Bunnies' music and movement experience. This experience allowed them to further develop their physical wellbeing, performing various fundamental movements including jumping, hopping, and skipping, as they carried out the role of a sleeping bunny. During this activity, their educator encouraged them to produce a 'b, b, b', letter sound as they performed these veracious actions.

During outdoor play time, the children also enjoyed practicing their batting skills where they were given the opportunity to hit a balloon that hung from the shade cloth using a cardboard baton. This allowed them to further develop their hand-eye coordination, strength and balance. Some children chose to use their hands instead of the baton.



Sustainability Report

Recycling

The children are enthusiastic about the Return and Earn Project and the bin is filling up steadily. We have managed to drop off 3 loads of bottles at the Berowra Post Office where Michael is always happy to dispose of these for us. To date we have earned \$30. Once we reach our target of \$100 we will be donating it to an animal rescue shelter where animals, who have been injured in the bush fires, are being treated and cared for. Our target is on display on the wall near the big computer. Your bottles and cans which have the 10c refund are all very welcome, to be placed in the green Return and Earn bin close to the door. Thank you all, for your support.

The children have a good understanding of the need to recycle. At meal times the children are constantly checking that they are disposing of rubbish in the correct bins. Yellow bin for paper and cardboard recycling, grey bin for soft plastics taken to Coles for recycling, we collect fruit and vegetables scraps in a container for our worm farm, a small peddle bin for all other waste and the bin for ink cartridges and photocopier toner which everyone is welcome to use, is next to the big computer.

Book Exchange

Our book exchange basket is on display near the front gate. The children enjoy looking through these books and are welcome to take one home to read. We would be happy to have any pre-loved books from home to be shared with others. Please give them to a staff member and they will be placed in the basket for all to share.

Gardening

The garden is doing well with all the rain we have had recently. This has helped to fill the rain water container which is used to water plants that have been planted around the playground. With all the vegetable and fruit off cuts the children carefully keep aside for the worm farm, our worms have been able to produce good fertiliser to be used when watering the plants.



Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

Our focus in the past few weeks has been firmly placed on how to further improve and scrutinise our health and hygiene practices. We have always taken this policy very seriously within our Preschool environment and the outbreak of COVID-19 has only strengthened our commitment to keeping our children and educators safe and the families they go home to. **Thank you** to all our families for doing the right thing in keeping unwell children at home and for supporting the other measures we have put in place such as keeping drop off and pick up of children outside the Preschool room. We continue to reflect on our practices and improve our health and hygiene practices wherever we can.



Dates to Remember!

March 30th	Walkathon—postponed
April 10th	Good Friday—Preschool closed
April 13th	Easter Monday—Preschool closed



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