



Our Outdoor Environment

We are incredibly lucky here at Mt Colah Preschool to have such a spacious outdoor environment to play, learn and explore. It features a range of natural and built structures that promote children's development across all five learning outcomes.

Mud Kitchen—Our mud kitchen is a popular zone that encourages children to incorporate natural materials in their play while they experiment with cause and effect, practice using their fine motor skills to manipulate utensils and use their senses to explore.

Cubby House—Our cubby house is always a busy location within our outdoor environment which inspires children's imagination and creativity. We have seen it transform into schools, fire stations, holiday destinations, restaurants and vehicles. Our cubby house also encourages the development of many social skills including learning to share spaces and resources fairly.

Garden Beds—The children love watering, weeding, planting and harvesting in our garden beds and sensory garden which provides them with an opportunity to care for nature and increases their awareness of sustainable practices. It also gives children a sense of agency and accomplishment by being involved in the gardening process from start to finish, then getting to enjoy the produce for their afternoon tea.

Obstacle Course—We have a range of obstacle course equipment which we rotate regularly to provide different levels of challenges and focus on different areas of gross motor development. These include stepping stones, A-frames, balance beams and ladders which support children to develop their hand eye and foot eye coordination, balance, upper and lower body strength as well as bi-lateral coordination (coordinating both sides of their body simultaneously). Obstacle courses also encourage risk taking in a safe and controlled environment and require children to wait and take turns.

Grass Area—We are so lucky to have a large area of natural grass which provides a versatile space that can be used for a variety of fun activities and learning opportunities. This space can be used for ribbon dancing, ball sports and gymnastics which all encourage the development of children's overall gross motor control. It is also perfect for group games (including one of our favourites - stuck in the mud) which encourage children to follow rules, work as a team and move safely through their environment.



August in Review 2024

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Our Preschool Programme in Review

Sweetpeas and Bluebells:

The Sweetpeas and Bluebells consistently display their curious learning dispositions through asking questions, investigating and exploring with their senses. Discovery times provide a great opportunity to engage in group discussions where children can share their thoughts, explore their interests and ask questions to further their understanding. Educators will often host Q&A sessions with the iPad to answer all the children's interesting questions about their world such as "What is tree sap made of?" and "What does a hyena look like?". Educators also use children's questions during Discovery time to determine future discovery topics based on what they want to learn more about – and there are always LOTS of questions! The children have also been engaging in activities that promote the use of mathematical concepts such as measuring during cooking, problem solving while completing a puzzle and experimenting with motion while racing cars. All of these experiences demonstrate that the children are developing a life-long love of learning and becoming enthusiastic participants in their education journey.



Schoolies: Maths is Everywhere!

We are regularly supporting the children's numeracy skills throughout their daily routine through open-ended activities and a play-based approach. This includes but is not limited to exploring concepts such as numbers, measurement, patterns, geometry and data. Play spaces are an integral part of our programme, supporting the children reach developmental milestones by extending on their interests and strengths. While exploring mathematical concepts, we look closely at what the children may be interested in, for example—if the child is interested in threading, an educator might use this as an opportunity to further explore patterns. Maddie recently added measurement and numbers into the children's car play, with the goal of reaching the numbers using their cars to score points, exploring numbers and measurement through a fun and engaging way. A child who may be interested in drawing, might be offered dot-to-dots to further support their counting and number recognition. Educators regularly scaffold the children's learning through open-ended questioning, explanation and encouraging mathematical terminology. Our learning environments are also continuously exposing the children to numeracy concepts such as recently adding numbers 1—20 in the bathroom for counting while the children are washing their hands. We regularly integrate counting and numbers into our group times such as through transitions (5 Little Ducks) as the children see the decrease in people and numbers. Our recent Olympics focus involved many numeracy skills, including making predictions, counting items as well as rote counting and data collection (keeping a record of our medals won). These developing numeracy skills will further support our Schoolies with their transition to big school!



The Olympics

29th July—9th August



What a fun filled two weeks full of competitive games and sports to celebrate the 2024 Olympic Games! The children explored the history of the games including the Olympic torch and Olympic rings as well as learned about the opening and closing ceremony, the medals and of course the sporting events. We kept a record of the medals won by Australian athletes, where we were excited to discover each morning if we had won any and for what event! The church community garden became our sporting arena, the perfect place for games such as running races, soccer games, tug-of-war and shotput. On our rainy days, we utilised our upstairs area for gymnastic competitions, breakdancing and virtual surfing!



The Olympics



All Around the World

W.C 12th August



During the Olympic Games, the children were very interested in the different countries that we kept hearing about on the medal tally. We decided to explore this interest further and learn about different countries around the world. Firstly, we looked at countries where the Olympics have been such as Japan, where we discovered the bullet train and tried to work out just how fast we would have to run to beat this - very very very fast! We also looked at Mt Fuji, discovering this is actually a volcano! Using world maps and a globe, the children chose different countries to explore, where we looked at how people live, what they eat, how they dress and music and dance. This also gave the children an opportunity to share places they have been to visit and share their experiences. This discovery interest topic supported the children's ability to learn about different cultures and respond to diversity with respect (EYLF L.O. 2.2).



Book Week



What a fantastic week we had as we celebrated all things books. The children were able to share their favourite books with their friends. We had some amazing costumes and the educators also enthusiastically joined in with this. We engaged in a variety of experiences based off popular around some books including making yummy porridge from the story of Goldilocks, building houses using the same materials as the Three Little Pigs, making our own gingerbread men, and churning our own butter based off the story Belinda.

Here at preschool we love books, the children will often sit at the book mat with an educator or their peers and look at books. It is a magical way to transport our imaginations, build vocabulary, improves memory and concentration, helps build knowledge on the world around them, enhances creativity and improves communication skills. 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!



Book Week Continued

Our Favourite Books

A big thank you to the families who shared their favourite books with us during Book Week. Below is a list of some of our favourite books! There might be some new ones you would like to add to your book library at home.

Slinky Malinky, Open the Door! - Lynley Dodd
The Monster Game—Philip Bunting
The Highway Rat—Julia Donaldson
Disney Frozen
I Love my Tutu Too—Ross Burach
Can't You Sleep Little Bear—Martin Waddell
The Princess in Black—Dean and Shannon Hale
The Polar Express—Chris Van Allsburg
Hairy Maclary—Lynley Dodd
Dear Zoo—Rod Campbell
The Gruffalo—Julia Donaldson
Harry Potter—JK Rowling
The Very Cranky Bear—Nick Bland
Charlie Cook's Favourite Book—Julia Donaldson



The Paralympics and

Beatrix's visit W.C 26th August



As we explored a week of Paralympics, the children learnt more about different abilities and conditions that people have and the ways in which they live with it. We looked into the events and sports of the 2024 Paralympics and were lucky to have a past preschool mum Beatrix come in to show the children her prosthetic leg. During this time, the children had the chance to ask Beatrix questions, have a closer look at some prosthetics and what they are made from and look at some Paralympians that wear prosthetics. We celebrated how we are all different but the importance of being treated the same.



Father's Day/Loved Ones Breakfast

Wednesday 28th August

What a fantastic turnout we had for our special loved ones breakfast. The children loved to be able to share their Preschool life with their Dads and Grandads, engaging in a variety of experiences with them including biscuit decorating, kite making, planting succulents, Lego and outdoor games.

It was also an opportunity for families to develop relationships between each other (MCPK Philosophy). We love that we are able to hold these special events that bring our Preschool community together, further developing the children's sense of belonging.





Little Endeavours with Jo



Another month has flown by and we have kept busy doing lots of baking, being noisy and have been following the Olympic Games by making a chart and cutting out medals to add as Australia won them. We will follow up this when we add medals from the Paralympics.

Olympic Medal Chart and Torches – The children were very excited as the Olympics approached and showed a real connection to Australia and other countries their families were connected to. We made the medal chart with the Olympic Rings which every country's flag has at least one colour from. Cutting the medals was good fine motor practice and the children were able to interact with the medal chart throughout the fortnight.



Noisy Nick Squeakers – We certainly made lots of noise as the children used string, a paper cup and sponge to make a squeaker which many thought sounded like a dog. They experimented with a dry and wet sponge, and with short and long tugs, making different noises. It was great for the children's fine motor and co-ordination as they had to thread, squeeze and pull for this activity.



Little Endeavours with Jo

Baking – We always ensure that our cooking experiences have a variety of options so that all children can be involved in the preparation and eating of the food factoring in allergies, dietary and cultural requirement. The preschoolers helped check the recipes to start with to make sure we had all the ingredients and we followed the instructions together, step by step. The children contributed to mathematical discussions as they measured ingredients and collaborated with their peers, working together to achieve cooking success



Book Week Baking – The children were so enthusiastic in our baking week we decided to bake for Book Week as well. The children's used their fine motor skills to roll the gingerbread dough, and made predications with their dough as they estimated if it was big enough to fit the gingerbread man cutter. The children shows creativity through their decorating. We also made banana bread using bananas from the freezer, after reading The Little Red Hen story which talks about how you need to be involved and help if you want to share the end product.





Phonemic Awareness Programme

During the month of August, the Schoolies have been learning about the focus sounds /d/, /n/ and /o/ with Dippy Duck, Noisy Nick and Oscar Orange. The children have been engaged in a variety of songs, stories, activities and craft experiences.

While learning about the /d/ sound with Dippy Duck, the children enjoyed engaging in dinosaur activities to further develop their /d/ production in the word 'dinosaur'. Jo made dinosaur fossils with the children using clay, there was a dinosaur sanctuary in the sandpit, and we learnt Blippi's dino song. The children also strengthened their letter formation of the letter 'd' through the activity sheets.



For the /n/ sound, the children paid close attention to the position of their tongue while producing the sound (tongue touching behind teeth, voice on and air out noise) using the model teeth and learning fun songs with Peachie Speechie (Speech therapist online). We continued to set up play spaces that promote the /n/ sound including the nurses pretend play and hammer and nails.





Phonemic Awareness Programme

While learning about the /o/ sound with Oscar Orange, the children enjoyed making o o o orange juice! What a fun and hands-on experience to practise producing the /o/ sound in orange! The children were able to add some sugar to make it sweeter or have it on it's sour own. Thank you to the Cowan family for the oranges from your family member's tree!



Mini Moves

The children have been working on more fundamental movement skills this month, some familiar and some new. We started off with **CATCHING**. Using different sized balls, the children were shown how to hold their arms and hands in preparation to catch the ball that was coming towards them. The skill encourages the children to catch the ball with their hands only, instead of their full arms, and this was a bit tricky to learn at the start. This was also good revision practice for throwing skills too.

Our second skill this month was **SIDE-SLIDING**. One of the techniques we used to learn this skill was pretending to be crabs moving quickly across the sand. The children were encouraged to keep their bodies sideways as they moved, bringing feet together between each step. We also pretended to be a circus act, balancing on a tightrope!

Most recently, we have been learning **GALLOPING**. This is a skill where we can pretend to be horses, ponies or even unicorns! This is a good precursor skill to learn before skipping, which we will practice next term. The children have been learning to swing their arms as they step, propelling themselves forward.

As always, the children are encouraged to use these skills in play, dancing, and through practising the skill. You can also practice these skills at home and if you have any questions about your child's gross motor skills, please come and speak to your educator.



SUSTAINABILITY

Janet's little Helpers

This month the children have been assisting our green thumb Janet, in weeding, watering, re-planting and top soiling our garden beds. We have planted some new cucumbers and snap peas for afternoon teas.

~ Funky Foods~

In Australia, roughly 30% of what our nation's farms grow is never eaten. Much of this is due to modern-day beauty standards for food. Funny-looking fruits, misshapen vegetables, and delicious but odd-sized produce are squandered at every level.

Our preschool has now incorporated Funky Foods as part of our weekly shop for the children's afternoon teas as they provide fresh fruits and vegetables, a nice variety which encourages the children to try new foods and most importantly, benefits the farmers, helps prevent food waste, and ultimately helps save our environment.



Quality Improvement Plan—Cultural Responsiveness

This month we have been exploring the Tongan culture which represents one of our families backgrounds. Lucy and Lola proudly shared aspects of their families culture teaching us some simple words, clothing, music and dances important to their culture.



September Birthdays

A big Happy Birthday to all of our children having a birthday this month!



Eda—5 years
Owen—5 years
Piper—4 years
Ivy—5 years
Lucy T—4 years
Eliza—4 years



Community Connections



Dates and Events for Kindergarten 2025 Families

Picture book readings & craft after school:

- Thursday 5 September 3:30pm-4:00pm
- Wednesday 18 September 3:30-4:00pm
- Wednesday 25 September 3:30-4:00pm

Book Parade:

- Wednesday 11 September 9:00am-11:00am

'Got It!' Kindergarten transition parent seminar:

- Wednesday 16 October 6:00pm-7:30pm

Kindergarten 2025 parent information night

- Monday 4 November 6:00-7:30pm

KindiStart sessions

- Tuesday 5, 12 & 19 November 9:15am-10:45am
- OR
- Thursday 7, 14 & 21 November 9:15am-10:45am

Community Connections



Picture book reading and craft sessions

Children aged 3-5 years old are invited to visit Mount Colah Public School (MCPS) for a series of picture book readings and craft activities. This community event is an excellent opportunity for students enrolling in Kindergarten 2025 to become familiar with the school library through a fun activity. To ensure we have the right amount of craft materials, please complete a short RSVP survey for the sessions you would like to attend by scanning the QR code or visiting the links. We kindly ask that children are accompanied by an adult.

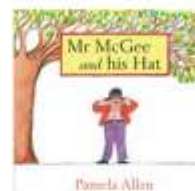
Mr McGee and his Hat by Pamela Allen

Date: Thursday 5th September

Time: 3:30pm-4:00pm

Location: MCPS library

<https://forms.gle/zfcZtuVwE94tjPuA6>



Mister Seahorse by Eric Carle

Date: Wednesday 18th September

Time: 3:30pm-4:00pm

Location: MCPS library

<https://forms.gle/VVwYxQtKEJE1RceU8>



I Need a Hug by Aaron Blabey

Date: Wednesday 25th September

Time: 3:30pm-4:00pm

Location: MCPS library

<https://forms.gle/cq2LPZzVbWZdWMHj9>

