

Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



a caring place to learn and grow



We are Settling Into the New Year..... We are now back into the swing of things and time is already flying by. The children have done a great job in getting to know each other and our new children are settling in very well. Parents we encourage you to follow the children's example. If you see another parent you don't know please introduce yourself and start to build some connections with other parents. You never know they may turn out to be a life-long friend!

As we move further into the year, if your child wishes to spend time with another child outside of the Preschool environment, please feel free to drop an introductory note into the family's parent pocket. In line with our privacy policy we are unable to pass family contact details between you all.

Child Safety Parents just a reminder to please not let your child wander or run around in the car park unattended. **Please, please** hold your child's hand in the car park and know where they are at all times. Please enter the Preschool driveway, driving slowly, and keeping a close eye out for our little pedestrians. And of course, please do not leave other children in the car during pick up and drop off times.



Immunisation—4 Year Old Booster If your child is due for their 4 year old immunisation booster please make sure that it administered by the due date. Immunisation is linked to child care subsidy payments and entitlements will be cancelled if the immunisation is not administered in a timely fashion. It can be challenging having benefits re-instated. Please remember to provide the Preschool with an updated Immunisation Register Statement once immunisation is completed—thank you.



February 2020

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Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

Sweetpeas Welcome to the new preschool year, it is lovely to see so many happy faces with children ready to start the day. A special welcome to all our new friends we look forward to getting to know you. We will be learning how to make friend and navigate our way through the routines of the day which can be a challenge but with the help of educators and older children everyone is doing so well settling into the new environment with so many new faces and routines to follow. We are always happy to talk to you about your child's day and to listen to any concerns you may have. *'Happiness is when you make unexpected friends'*

Bluebells: A very warm welcome to all of our new families who have joined us this year at preschool and welcome back to our returning families. We hope you had fantastic holidays and are looking forward to a new year of fun, friendship and learning. Over the next few weeks we will get to know each other better and we are always happy to chat with you about how your child is settling in and enjoying their day. This month we will be exploring the concept of Fill Your Bucket which is all about kindness and thinking of others.

Schoolies: A big welcome to all our Schoolie friends and their families. It has been wonderful to see all your smiley faces as you walk through the front door ready for the day ahead. We look forward to a fun filled year where together we will develop some wonderful friendships and bonds with one another in a holistic and thriving learning environment. In the coming weeks the children will be participating in our Schoolie programme which will be a fun, challenging time. Our daily routine will offer many opportunities for our Schoolies to develop greater sense of self, build confidence and foster a love of learning through our educational programme in preparation for school next year. Over the coming weeks the children will be commencing our Phonemic Awareness Programme. We will explore phonemic sounds of each letter of the alphabet in a fun and exciting way. More information on the Phonemic Awareness Program can be found later in the Newsletter.



Educator Groups and Developmental Groups



Assigning children to educator groups and developmental groups is one of the hardest jobs we do. We start out by date of birth but we have other considerations such as trying to make sure each educator only has 10 children per group per day, amongst other factors and as there is no set pattern with the children's bookings this job is really tricky. You will have noticed on your first day, that your child has been allocated to an educator's group. This educator will be delivering the educational programme activities to your child, undertaking observations and recording your child's progress in their individual portfolio. They will be your first point of contact with any exchange of information or questions or concern regarding your child. Whilst saying this, our team of educators work together closely and any of our educators will be able to assist you should your educator be away for any reason.

We then also assign the children to developmental groups. In essence, any child who is starting school the following year is considered a Schoolie. Children starting school 2 years out are Bluebells and our 3 year old friends are Sweetpeas. Every year we have different combinations of ages and as such the developmental groups do not always fit neatly in with the educator groups.

Please be assured that regardless of what educator group your child is in they will be receiving the developmental activities in line with their developmental group. For example: if your child is a Bluebell and your teacher is Deon and your friend's child is also a Bluebell and their teacher is Stephanie they will still be doing the same "Bluebell" developmental work and will be individually supported and challenged as required.

We hope this is a clear explanation however, do not hesitate to talk to your child's educator or Lara if you have any further questions.



Participation in **Show and Tell** is important for your child as it promotes the development of self confidence and expressive and receptive language skills. It also provides the opportunity for new learning as all the children contribute towards the ensuing discussion either by asking questions or telling their experience. Every child will be invited to participate in Show and Tell two times per term.

When it is your child's turn for Show and Tell they will be given the special Show and Tell bag. *This means that their Show and Tell day will be the same day in the following week.*

Your child can bring any item that fits in the bag to talk about or they can do "talking" news and tell us about a recent adventure. Please do not worry about what your child chooses to bring or how many times they choose to bring the same item. What is important is their participation! If you have any questions please see your child's educator.



Enrolments

We currently have 2 places left this year , if you know anyone who may be interested please let them know. Also a quick reminder to submit your waiting list form for any younger children you wish to attend Preschool in 2021 or even 2022. You are no doubt aware that we always have a healthy number of enrolments that usually sees all placements booked so it is wise to be on the waiting list as early as possible. If you have any friends in the same situation you may like to let them know!

Open Day

We will be holding an Open Day at Preschool on **Wednesday, March 18th from 10am to 12pm.**

The purpose of the Open Day is to invite new families to look around the Preschool and experience the educational environment we provide. It also provides the opportunity for new families to explore any questions they have about starting Preschool, gain understanding around our Philosophy and see how our educational programme is delivered as well as an opportunity to meet our lovely team of educators.

If you know anyone who is interested please invite them along.

Many thanks.



February Birthdays'

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

Sophia—3 yrs

Kaylan—4 yrs

Jemima—3 yrs

Zachary—3 yrs

Jackson—4 yrs

Abigail—3 yrs

Bridget—4 yrs

Summer—4yrs

Zara—4yrs

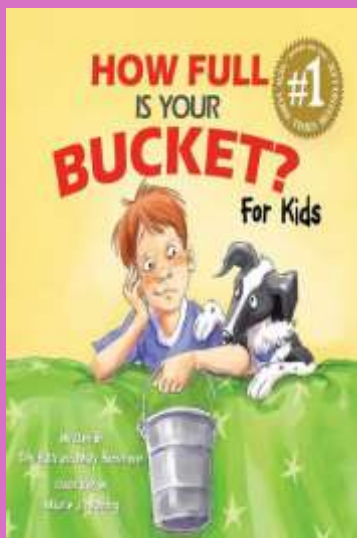
Samantha—4yrs



Scholastic Book Club Mt Colah Preschool offer the Scholastic Book Club to families which is an opportunity for you to purchase books at discounted prices. The brochures come out twice a term and orders can be placed by returning the order form with cash to the preschool or through the LOOP app which you can download.



Every order placed with Scholastic earns the preschool 20% in commission which enables us to buy books and resources for preschool and keep our own library up to date. The first leaflet will be in your communication pocket in the next week or 2 with all the information you need to place an order. Please see Deon if you have any questions.



How Full is Your Bucket?

During February we will be introducing a story 'How Full is your Bucket' to all our preschool children. Returning children will be familiar with this story. The Bucket is a metaphor that encourages the filling of another's bucket through kindness and helpfulness. Throughout the Preschool and spilling into other areas of the children's lives, we endeavour to create a welcoming and loving atmosphere for encompassing our children, family members and the community.

We will read stories that further the children's positive interactions and understanding of The Bucket, continuously talk about the concept during group time and have the children identify when someone has been kind or thoughtful filling another person's bucket—in the past everyone claps and applauds in support. In the past the children have responded really positively to this and constantly approach their educators' and share their bucket filling experiences.

Children will often approach an educator and say "Sarah filled my bucket" or "I filled her bucket because I said she could play". Alex hugs his educator then announces "I filled your bucket". We will continue with "The Bucket" concept for the rest of the year. If you have any questions please ask an educator or your child. And feel free to use The Bucket metaphor at home. Kindness and consideration of others is a wonderful gift to give our children.





We are a peanut free and whole egg free Preschool

Please do not send food items that contain peanuts, walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios and pecans—or products that have these items appearing within the ingredient line. In particular, peanut butter and Nutella (or other nut based spreads) are not to be sent to Preschool.

Please also do not send food items containing whole egg. In particular whole boiled eggs and egg sandwiches. Thank you for helping to keep our children safe.

Phonemic Awareness Programme

Our Phonemic Awareness Programme is delivered to the Schoolie Group each day using a variety of activities that centre on the sound of the week. These activities can be anything from stories, songs, puzzles, poems to art and craft. The primary purpose of the Phonics Programme is for the children to have **fun with sound** and this may flow onto letter recognition.

We use the Letterland Characters as the foundation of our programme and focus on a different letter sound over a two week period. The Schoolies can't wait to get started on the Phonics Programme and are very excited to travel to Letterland and meet all of the characters.

Over February and into March we will be meeting Sammy Snake, Annie Apple and Clever Cat. You can support your child's learning at home by referring to the information provided to you in the Phonics Programme. Also, the new phonemic awareness play space will be introduced within the learning environment. This play space will provide opportunity for all children, particularly our Schoolie friends to begin to explore their phonemic awareness through play. This space along with other planned experiences within the indoor and outdoor environment will provide opportunities for the children to engage with our focus letter sound.



We are now on Facebook! 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 importance of play in children's development





Our lovely Jo will be coming in two times a week to deliver special activities this year. Jo will be organising activities for the children that will link with our developmental focus and weekly interest.



Jo's activities will get little hands and minds working as they further explore art, craft and cooking. Also, Jo will be extending our environmental programme and will involve the children in our Preschool vegetable patch and our worm farm! A notice will be displayed each week to indicate what activities Jo has lined up for the week.

Forms are being sent home asking parents to complete and return to Preschool. One was a form called "All About Me" which went home to all families. Another form is a questionnaire about starting school. Please return these **as soon as possible**. Many thanks for your assistance.



Clothing Policy: Please remember to ensure your child's shoulders are covered to protect them from the sun by dressing them in a t-shirt. Please do not dress your child in singlets or strappy tops/dresses. Please remember that thongs or crocs are not allowed at Preschool. Please dress your child in well fitted shoes or sandals. Our outdoor area is challenging and requires secure footwear to help avoid accidents.



As part of our sustainability plan, the preschool has a book exchange program. The aim of this is to teach the children about how books we may no longer want may be enjoyed by someone else and also encourages an early interest in books and stories. The books are in a black basket near the main gate and has a selection of age appropriate books for your child to borrow. Once you have finished with your

borrowed book, you can bring it back. As this is an exchange, you are also welcome to bring in any unwanted books from home for other families to borrow and enjoy.

Please only allow your child to take one book at a time so that everyone has an opportunity. If you would like to donate some books, please hand these into Adele or Deon and we will put them in the basket when we can.



GENERAL INFORMATION



Opening and Closing Times

Due to licencing regulations, we are unable to accept your child before **8.30am**.

We close our doors at **4.30pm** and the staff vacate the premises at this time. If you wish to have a chat to staff when collecting your child - **which we highly recommend** - please allow plenty of time to do so by arriving at Preschool by at least 4.15pm. Of course if commitments mean you are arriving just prior to 4.30pm staff will be very happy to chat with you about your child in the morning at drop off times. We do have a policy for charging families for collection of children after 4.30pm and this

Remember....

Please remember a **water bottle and hat** on every occasion your child attends Preschool. Thank you.



Emergency Contact Number

In the event the Preschool has an emergency evacuation we have an emergency mobile contact number:

0431 810 445

It would be wise for family and carers to add this number to the contact lists in their phones.

Don't Lose it—Label Everything!

Please remember to label your child's belongings so they always make it home. This includes hats, water bottles, jumpers and jackets and lunch boxes. We have a lost property box so if you do misplace an item have a look in the lost property box kept near the sign in table.

Quick Contact

Please find below a quick contact list to minimise your time when you have an enquiry or need to pass on information.

Illness or Absence from Preschool:

Ph: 9476 4101 **prior to gam on the day** of absence to advise teaching staff.

Checking on a Child who may have been unsettled or to pass information to teachers for a child attending that day:

Ph: 9476 4101 - at any time, talk to any of our teachers

Account enquiries, CCS enquiries, Enrolment enquiries or any concerns in general:

Annette: 9943 0731 at any time or via email at annette@freelancer.net.au

Concerns or questions regarding the Programme or your child specifically:

Ph: 9476 4101 to speak with Lara or any of the educators





Sustainability Programme

Mt Colah Preschool has a strong sustainability focus, with many practices and projects that have been developed over the years. Every opportunity is used to make the children aware of the need to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. It is encouraging to see how enthusiastic the children are at helping to keep our precious planet clean. We have a recycling station with containers to collect empty boxes etc that is used for construction and craft, a soft plastic container for all the plastic wrapping that is generated during the day, a container to recycle paper and cardboard as well as a recycling box for ink cartridges and photocopier toner. This is situated next to the interactive screen please feel free to bring in any ink cartridges you wish to recycle.

We also have a hands-on garden project where we grow flowers, herbs, carrots and other vegetables for the children to understand where some of our food comes from and the hardships farmers face, particularly when there is a drought. Our worm farm plays a very important role in showing the children how worms are used to reduce vegetable waste into rich nutrients which in turn feed the flowers and vegetables growing in our garden



We are also conscious, during the day, to switch off lights not in use as well as using the air conditioner wisely in order to save on energy.



Last year we introduced Nude Foods to our Preschool, encouraging parents to pack morning tea and lunch items free of wrapping and packaging. This is a great way to teach children the difference their actions can make for their own health and the environment.



Return and Earn Project

As part of our Sustainability Programme we implemented a Return and Earn Project last year which has been really successful. With money earned, we managed to buy plants for our garden and were able to donate \$82 to Rural Aid Donations to help farmers who have had a really difficult time due to the drought. The Return and Earn project has given the children an opportunity to participate in activity reducing waste as well as developing sorting and counting skills and plotting our progress on a chart in order to reach a goal, earning money which we can put back into our sustainable projects and donate to charities in need.

We would appreciate your help in collecting drink containers with the 10c deposit label on the bottle/cans to add to our collection and together we will help make a difference in reducing waste. You will find a big blue container undercover outside in which to deposit your bottles. Once a fortnight this will be taken to a collection point and redeemed for cash.



Eligible drink containers

Under Return and Earn, most empty 150-millilitre to 3-litre drink containers are eligible for a 10-cent refund when presented to an approved NSW collection point.

Container materials that are eligible for a refund include PET, HDPE, glass, aluminium, steel, liquid paperboard.

Containers should be empty, uncrushed, unbroken and have the original label attached.

Wine, spirits, cordial and plain milk containers are not eligible.

Throughout the year we discuss the importance of recycling, you may soon find your children sharing this information with you at home!

Together we can make a significant difference, no matter how small.



Settling your child into Preschool



It is natural for there to be some apprehension for both parents and child when your child first attends Preschool. The child has new routines to learn, new people to meet and adjust to new Educators and a new environment. Parents are worried about how the child will cope. However, starting Preschool is an important step in providing the child with an introduction to school life and independence and it is important to get off to a positive start.

Children like regular and familiar routines. It can take some time for them to adjust to a new routine, rules or situation—such as starting Preschool. However, once settled the child's self esteem and confidence prosper.

Strategies to Settle in Your Child

- ♥ Keep to a regular routine in the mornings—arriving at around the same time each day, preferably prior to 9.30am.
- ♥ Spend some time with your child—sit with them at an activity. Over time reduce the time you spend in the mornings.
- ♥ Tell your child that you are leaving with a kiss and a hug and assure them that you will be back to pick them up and then leave no matter what :)
- ♥ Parting is often as difficult for the parent as it is for the child. If your child cries try to be excited for them and leave them with an Educator. Children often settle very quickly once the parent has left.
- ♥ You are free to ring the Preschool as often as you like during the day to see how your child is going.
- ♥ Let Educators know if your child is not themselves that day, so that if they become upset during the day Educators will be able to comfort your child appropriately.

- ♥ If someone different is picking up your child that day please let your child and Educators know.
- ♥ On starting your child it is suggested giving them short days and then lengthening the days over time.
- ♥ Please talk to the Educators if you have any concerns or if you need to pass on information concerning your child.

The Educator's Role

On arrival your family will be greeted by one of our Educators. The Educator will enquire as to how the child is feeling and if the parents have any particular concerns or issues they need to discuss.

The Educator will assist the family to settle the child into the first activity of the day and place the child next to another child and take the time to introduce them to each other.

Should the child become distressed as the parent is leaving the Educator will put into action a strategy of acknowledging the child's feelings, assuring them that their parent will be back to collect them and then encouraging the child to do something special that the child enjoys.

So, some children skip off without a problem other children find it really difficult to say goodbye to mum or dad. Our advice is to be consistent with your morning routine. Generally leaving is the hard part—saying goodbye. By keeping a consistent morning routine on each visit your child will grow to understand this is what is going to happen each time and we find over coming weeks, will settle in much faster.

At Preschool we provide strong daily routines which provide comfort as children settle in. We have created a visual routine board to assist settling the new and returning children. It identifies each transitional period and educators spend time showing the children the pictures and discussing the routines and the board is



located to easily allow the children to view it throughout the day.





Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

As part of the accreditation process each childcare service is required to implement an ongoing Quality Improvement Plan. On entry to the Preschool we have displayed our focus areas for 2020. Please stay tuned for further information and updates. A copy of the current QIP is located at the sign in table and parents are invited to read this document at any time.



Dates to Remember!

February 14t Please return all forms to Preschool

Thursday March 21st Preschool Open Day (New Families to Preschool)



Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten

Cnr Amaroo Avenue and Pacific Highway

Mt Colah NSW 2079

Preschool: Ph: 9476 4101

Email: info@mtcolahpreschool.com.au

Annette: Ph: 9943 0731

Email: annette@freelancer.net.au