

Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



a caring place to learn and grow

Welcome back to Preschool everyone! We trust you have had a wonderful and relaxing time with family and friends over the New Year break. Of course we extend a very warm welcome to our new families and know that you and your child will quickly settle into the Preschool routine.

We start back Monday, January 20th and look forward to an exciting year ahead full of fun, friendships and learning. For parents new to Preschool, we send out a newsletter via email every month which contains feedback from each of the educators about the various activities their group has been doing along with interesting information on development and education for the 3 - 5 year age group. Importantly, it keeps families up to date with upcoming events during the year so it is great if you can take the time to read the newsletter each month.

On our return to Preschool we spend the first two weeks getting to know each other and start to build those personal relationships which are so important to our environment. Please say hi to all the educators and we encourage you to take the time to introduce yourself to other families—they may end up being life-long friends!

As we head into the new year, please do not hesitate to talk to the educators about any questions or concerns you may have at any time and especially during the first few weeks, as everyone gets into the swing of things.

Warmest regards, *Annette*



**January
&
February
2021**

Inside ...

Our Teaching Team

Educational

Programme Info

Contact Information





Annette

Welcome to Preschool for 2021!

The educators wish you a warm welcome. Please do not hesitate to ask any of us anything at anytime! We are looking forward to getting to know your child and know they will enjoy the wonderful year we have planned at Preschool.



Deon



Lara

Class Groups: Whilst we do have lots of free playtime all together, your child will be allocated a primary educator and the educator allocation list will be on display on your first day at Preschool. Your child's educator will be working with your child during the year and recording their development in their portfolio. They are your main point of contact in relation to your child, however, you will soon find that all the educators will have a strong relationship with your child as we work closely as a team.



Steph



Emily

Educational Program: During the first 2 weeks of Preschool we will be enjoying activities allowing us to get to know you and your child and for the children to get to know each other. Our Term 1 Educational Programme will be on display on your first day. If you have any questions please ask an educator. The children heading off to school in 2022 will be participating in our Phonemic Awareness Programme and the programme



Adele

will start during February. If you have any questions please see Steph or Emily. For new children to Preschool your child's educator will be meeting with you briefly to introduce themselves, answer any questions you may have and to discuss the setting of a developmental goal for your child.



Jo

Show and Tell: When it is your child's turn for Show and Tell they will be given the Show and Tell bag the week before, in readiness for them to participate in Show and Tell on that same day, of the following week. Your child can bring an item that fits in the bag to talk about or they can do "talking" news and tell us about a recent adventure. Show and Tell will commence during February.

Little Endeavours: Get ready for lots of fun and learning as Jo starts the Little Endeavours Programme from February. Exploring, experimenting, creating, sharing and working together - Little Endeavours and especially time spent with Jo is a highlight for the children.



Please always remember to check your Parent Pocket on each visit to ensure you have the latest news!





The Preschool has many procedures in place to minimise an outbreak of COVID, or for that matter any transmissible disease. Our day to day health and safety practices include, but are not limited to, thorough cleaning of resources, regular cleaning of touch services, educating the children around proper hand washing and also discussing with the children staying healthy in relation to healthy foods and exercise.

On arrival at Preschool all children and families are asked to observe the following:

- Only one adult to accompany each child
- Adults and children will be asked to use hand sanitiser on entry
- Adults are asked to make their visit at drop off and pick up as brief as possible—under 5 minutes
- Adults are asked to ensure they maintain 1.5mtr distance to other adults, including educators. Should you wish to chat with other parents please do so once you have left the Preschool.
- Please be aware that it takes a little time to come in through the front door due to the checks in place so please be patient and wait at appropriate distances from others outside.
- During 2020 the children became used to being passed through the door on arrival and departure. If you would like to continue this routine then the educators would be happy to support this.

Should your child be unwell we encourage you to keep them home and notify the Preschool on 9476 4101 prior to gam. Should your child or anyone in the immediate family demonstrate respiratory symptoms and/or temperature or have been in contact with a person with COVID we as ask that you:

- Have the child and family members COVID tested
- Remain away from Preschool until you have the result
- Once the result is negative please forward the result to Preschool, at which time the child may return to Preschool.
- If the result is positive it would be appreciated if you could keep the Preschool updated on the advice you have been given. Your child will not be able to return to Preschool until a negative result is provided.

We thank you with your continued support in keeping the Preschool safe and look forward to seeing you all in 2021.



Preschool Accounts for 2021

Your first invoice for the year will be emailed to you in the next day or so and on your arrival at Preschool a printed copy will be in your parent pocket. This invoice will include fees for the first 4 weeks of Preschool and is due for payment by Friday, February 5th. Week commencing February 8th, you will receive your first fortnightly invoice (via email) and we are then in our fortnightly in advance payment cycle. Once we are into the fortnightly fee system, many parents elect to set up automatic funds transfer from their bank account to ours (banking details are found on your statement). If you do this please set up the payment for the **Thursday prior to the Friday due date** to ensure payment is recorded on our bank statement prior to the following Monday morning, when the next invoice is raised. This will avoid any unnecessary confusion of entries on your statement. We only accept payment via direct deposit or cheque, we do not accept cash payments for fees.



Please also ensure we have the correct email address on file to ensure you receive your fortnightly accounts. Please note if your account does not display the Child Care Subsidy you were expecting then you will need to refer to your online assessment within the Centrelink system to check your online application or contact Centrelink to rectify. Unfortunately, the Preschool is unable to make any changes to Child Care Subsidy entitlements.



First Time Checking In or Out

Parents please note you will need to have your mobile with you the first time you either check your child in or out of Preschool as your access code to our iCheck –in system will send the pin code to your phone. After this is set up you only need to remember your pin code for easy drop off and collection of your child.



Presently there are only a couple of places available at Preschool, which are on a Friday. Let Lara or Annette know if you would like to increase your days or if you know someone who may be interested in starting Preschool, please ask them to contact us.



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.



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.

January & February Birthdays

A big Happy Birthday to all of our children and educators.

Amelia 4yrs

Abigail 4yrs

Felix 5yrs

Max 4yrs

Madeline 3yrs

Mischa 4yrs

Sophia 4 yrs

and Lara ??

Jackson 5yrs

Zachary 4yrs

Bodhi 3yrs





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.

We are a peanut free and whole egg free Preschool

IMPORTANT

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, a 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.





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 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 educators for a child attending that day:

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

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 raise the children's awareness 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 are 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.



We are also supporters of the Nude Foods movement which encourages 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 have a Return and Earn Project which has been really successful. With money earned, we managed to buy plants for our garden, were able to donate to Rural Aid to help farmers and to help support the work done with our native animals after the fires. 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.





Communication

We have many ways of communicating with families. The educators value chatting with you as you drop off and pick up your child to keep you up to date with all that is going on at Preschool. We ask that you remember to check your parent pocket, located near the front door on your visits to ensure you are receiving the latest information. Aside from this newsletter which is emailed each month, you are also welcome to visit and 'like' our facebook page [Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten](#).



Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): As part of the Department of Education's accreditation process each childcare service is required to implement an ongoing Quality Improvement Plan. Our Quality Improvement Plan has set goals against the National Standards as we strive to continually improve the services we provide. Please refer to the Quality Improvement Plan display at our entry for regular updates as we focus on our goals. A copy of the current QIP is located at the sign in table and parents are invited to read this document at any time.



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