

Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



a caring place to learn and grow

The Benefits of Outdoor Play in Winter

As we deal with the cooler weather, we can sometimes be apprehensive about sending children outside to play. While it might feel like those rainy days restrict us from enjoying outdoor play, the truth is there are so many great benefits from popping on your gumboots, dressing warm and getting out into nature, even in winter! This includes;

Boosts the immune system - Research shows that being outdoors is excellent for kids' immune systems. Constantly being stuck indoors may mean an increased exposure to poorly ventilated indoor environments where bacteria and viruses live. Going outside means exposing our children to fresh air and boosts vitamin D levels.

Promotes physical activity— In winter, kids can be stuck indoors for a period of time, children need to get outside to run, jump and wiggle using their big muscles! These muscles are different to the ones used during other seasons as there is an increase in physical activity to support their gross motor development. For example, compare balancing on a wet, slippery log to a dry one over the warmer months.

Builds early science and maths concepts—Walking through puddles or running through them shows the different splashes that happen with different forces – all this is building science concepts. Noticing differences in sizes, shapes and colours and counting leaves /sticks / stones will help your child to develop their number and counting skills. We may not realise it, but our kids are learning so much through play. Exploring the world in winter gives lots of opportunity for making discoveries and experimenting. Doing something simple like shaking the branches after it has rained teaches cause and effect.

Builds risk-assessment and problem solving skills -Winter is a great time for children to learn about what is safe, what is not safe and why when playing outside. Children love to explore risk-taking: through this they learn it's OK to try new things and make mistakes – it's how we learn! Wet and slippery conditions in winter provide lots of opportunities to practice these skills. Clambering over logs and attempting to climb trees develops gross motor skills, strength and agility – so encourage this movement. When children learn to solve problems on their own they develop independence and self-confidence as well as their thinking skills. So don't be afraid to give your child some space and time to take the lead.



July in Review 2022

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Our Preschool Programme in Review

Sweetpeas: We have all enjoyed fun, relaxed, crazy days during the school holidays, as the children participated in PJ Day, Winter Wonderland, Crazy Sock Day and the very popular Messy Play Day. There were many opportunities for the children to express themselves and explore. How lovely watching those, who were a bit hesitant at first about messy play, inch forward and find the thrill of digging into the cold spaghetti, plunging hands into goop and leaving little painted handprints on paper. Mix up day caused lots of laughter and a little confusion when children arrived with puzzled looks as they found the classroom mixed up and turned around and even group and mealtimes also being reversed. The children had opportunities to work towards their goals as they participated in all that was on offer supporting communication, language development, building relationships with others, developing concentration and the ability to play independent. By being connected the Sweetpeas discovered new things about themselves and their world. It was great being able to share with families, by way of portfolios, all the learning experiences and activities the Sweetpeas were involved in over the last 6 months. We look forward to the next six months, learning and growing together.

Bluebells: Here we are in Term 3 already, and what a fun month June was! The children experienced a variety of activities during the recent school holidays, and a great time was had by all. Since the start of this term, we have been focussing on our cognitive skills and participating in activities that support our focus and concentration skills. Research indicates that children's attention span is approximately 2 to 3 minutes per year of age, so our 3 and 4 year olds are able to concentrate for roughly 6-12 minutes on an activity. With this in mind, the children have been encouraged to spend more time at an activity, with the intention of developing these concentration skills. This group particularly enjoy puzzles and often ask for certain ones, even more challenging ones. Puzzles develop memory skills, as well as an ability to plan, test ideas and solve problems. While completing a puzzle, children need to remember shapes, colours, positions and strategies to complete them. Children also begin to notice similarities and differences as they look at the pictures more carefully, to find where the pieces need to go. Puzzles are also great for developing essential fine motor skills. Picking up, moving and twisting the pieces of a puzzle helps children to develop finger strength and hand-eye coordination. As the child picks up and positions pieces, they also develop small-muscle control in their fingers. Follow your child's lead to discover what puzzles they are interested in and don't be afraid to extend their learning at home. You may have a 100 piece puzzle you can work on as a family – what a great learning opportunity!

Schoolies: As the Schoolies head into their final semester at preschool, we have been focusing on the children's cognitive skills. This includes utilising the brain's core functions such as thinking, reading, learning, retaining information and paying attention which assists the children to solve problems, complete tasks and make decisions. The children were introduced to some mass activities such as exploring weight using the scales by placing objects in each side to discover which side is 'lighter' and which side is 'heavier'. They also showed interest in experimenting with the tape measures to discover which objects are 'longer' and which are 'shorter'. These activities required the children to concentrate whilst applying a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations, solve problems and adapt these strategies to new situations, all of which will benefit your child as they transition into kindergarten.





Feature Creatures Show, Monday 18th July

We had Chloe and Riley from Feature Creatures visit us with some of their pets. The children were able to interact with a variety of amazing creatures through this experience. We met spiny leaf stick insects, a blue tongue lizard, a shingleback lizard, beautiful tree frogs, a saw shelled turtle and two of our favourites for the day—a crocodile and two pythons!

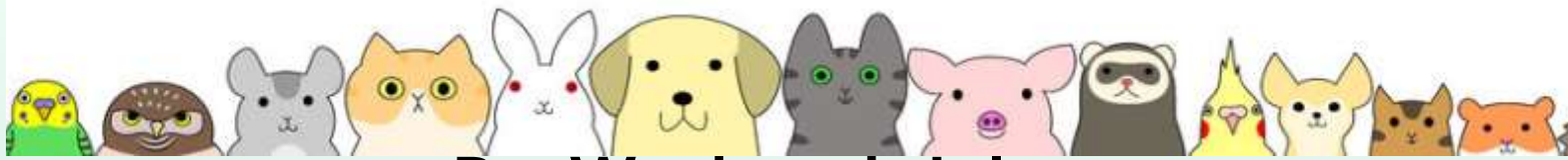
The children had the opportunity to explore relationships with other living things, as they learnt fun facts about the creatures as well as transfer some of their existing knowledge to answer questions. They also showed their confidence as they accepted new challenges and made new discoveries today. We were so impressed with the children's bravery, listening skills and





Feature Creatures Show, Monday 18th July





Pet Week 25th July

Stemming from the children's interest after our Feature Creatures Show, we had Pet Week at Preschool. The children enjoyed sharing photos of their pets as well as learning about how to be safe around animals. On Tuesday, we had a special visit from Maddie B's chicken Pickles, leading to many conversations about what Pickles eats, how she lays eggs and her unusual body parts including the comb on her head.

As the week continued, we read stories and explored images to discuss how to approach/pat a dog. On Wednesday and Thursday, the children were able to transfer what they had learnt when meeting Doug the Pug (Tegan's fur nephew) and Rosie (Annabelle's Nanna's dog). This was a very exciting experience with many children asking questions about Doug and Rosie.

We are glad the children have had positive interactions with a variety of pets this week, leading them to feel more confident when approaching pets outside of Preschool.

Thank you to the families who shared their pet photos with us, it was a great opportunity for the children to share an important aspect of their life.



July Holiday Programme

We had such a fun Holiday Programme! It offered us a lot of opportunity for fun, laughter and a lot of learning to take place. Here are some of the highlights...



Crazy Hair Day—Creativity was in all its glory today as the children had some radical hairstyles! The mirror got a great workout.

We also loved our colour run (donated by the Byrne Family).

The children loved running around the playground, trying to avoid the colour being thrown. Although I think some of the children ended up running towards the colour by the end!



A BIG THANK YOU to our wonderful family volunteers during the Holiday Programme—Amelia, Rene, Cheryl, Kirsten, Jess, Jodie and Mia. We appreciate your time and patience to help bring our fun themed days to life :)

July Holiday Programme

Games Day—This brought out our competitive nature but also our sportsmanship and ability to recognise our achievements and the achievements of others. It also allowed us to engage in more complex movements.



Mixed Up Day—Walking into preschool the children were amazed to see the room all mixed up with tables upside down, lockers on the other side of the room and shoes on table legs. We had morning tea for lunch and lunch for morning tea, read books backwards and had all sorts of mixed up fun. We even painted under tables! The children showed their sense of humour and ability to adapt to change throughout the day.



Little Endeavours with Jo

We all love the holiday programme, and it means that there are more LE activities each week as they relate to the theme for the day.



Popping Penguins – Our penguins were perfect as the week we made them /P/ was the sound being focused on in Letterland and in Discovery Time we were learning about Arctic animals. The preschoolers used their fine motor skills to manipulate and place the items needed to make their penguin, and then when playing with them investigated and explored the best way to make their penguin pop using trial and error.



Fizzy Playdough – Only three ingredients to make our fizzy playdough which seemed like normal playdough when we made and played with it, but the fun began when we poured vinegar on it. The preschoolers were amazed as it fizzed up and foamed. Such great sensory descriptions were shared by the children as they smelt and felt our playdough and then played with it as it became more slimy, foamy and liquid like – which fitted in with the Messy Day theme. Thanks to Vaughn’s mum Kirsten who came and shared the experience with us.



Little Endeavours with Jo

Grassy Heads – Grassy heads are always a favourite and they were perfect to make on Crazy Hair Day. Lots of creativity shown as the children made a face on their grassy head. Spraying them with water was fun and the children kept returning to spray their head a little more “to help them grow”. There was a bit of disappointment at the end of the session when some children were confused as there was no grass growing – we discussed what they knew about the conditions plants needed to grow and then transferred that knowledge to our own grass seeds growing. Thanks to Lily W’s mum Jodie and sister Mia who helped us.



Sock Puppets – Some amazing sock puppet people were made on Crazy Sock Day. Zac and Max’s mum Jess and Vaughn’s mum Kirsten helped the children to add features to their socks. Lots of decisions were to be made on what to use and the preschoolers showed their creativity and developing social skills as they worked collaboratively with our Mum helpers, conversing with them as they worked on their puppets. The children recognised their achievements as they proudly showed their puppet to their friends.





Phonemic Awareness Programme

During the month of July, the children have been learning about the focus sound /p/ as well as transferring what they have learnt through a fortnight of revision. The Schoolies have been engaged in a variety of songs, stories, activities and craft experiences with the Letterland character Peter Puppy.



The children have been very busy engaging in multiple activities as they explored the /p/ sound with Peter Puppy. This included making popping penguins with Jo. This activity not only encouraged the children to produce the /p/ sound but also developed their hand-eye coordination as they needed to catch the snow using the cup. The children also made pink and purple play dough with Jo which was a fun and hands-on activity. During the programme, we explored planes including the different parts of a plane. We also discussed passengers, pilots and passports (lots of /p/ words!). The children made their very own plane dramatic play space where they role played flying to different parts of the world.

Revision

During revision the children enjoyed playing games to revisit the sounds we have learnt this term. A popular game was the Letterland treasure hunt where the children needed to explore the playground/classroom for familiar Letterland characters. We also played the colours game using the Letterland characters. When the music stopped I would call out a sound we have explored this term, the children then needed to quickly find the matching letter to the sound in just three seconds. The children seemed to enjoy revisiting old Letterland friends and demonstrating their knowledge.



SUSTAINABILITY

BOOK LIBRARY

The Book Library has been so successful with children borrowing many books. We would appreciate any preloved books that can be donated to our library, as our books have been dwindling. Recycling these books will give others a chance to enjoy them as well. Please hand any book donations to an educator to be added to the library.



RAIN WATER

We have collected a lot of rain water lately in our rain water container. We syphoned this out and used it to water our garden and make wet sand for us to use in the sandpit, allowing us to be more creative.

RETURN AND EARN

We are happy to report that our target is slowly creeping up and is now sitting on \$155. We are looking forward to donating this money to Bear Cottage at the end of the year, supporting the important work they do. We have introduced a big bag from the Post Office which has helped to reduce the number of bags generated in transporting bottles. This is another way we are addressing plastic waste at preschool. We appreciate all bottle donations from families, please keep them coming, it is for a very good cause.





Public Holiday Survey Outcome

Thank you all for submitting your thoughts on our policy question regarding paying fees on public holidays. 80% of families have chosen to continue to pay for public holidays. Therefore, our policy remains unchanged. Thank you again for your contribution to our policy review.

Quality Improvement Plan Floorbooks

During the month of July educators have completed some training around Floorbooks which we are aiming to implement as part of our educational programme in August. We look forward to having these on display for families to look at :)

August Birthdays

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

Josh—5 years old

Aaliyah—5 years old

Declan—4 years old

Educator Belinda



Community News

Register now!

Kindergarten 2023 Information Night

Tuesday 9 August
6:30pm
via Zoom

The Mount Colah Public School Kindergarten 2023 Parent Information Night will be via Zoom. Please register via the Qr code.



- Is your child turning 5 before July 2023?
- Are you unsure if your child is school ready?
- Everything you need to know to prepare your child for Kindergarten.
- Q&A

All these and more will be answered on the night.

Enrol at <https://mtcolah-p.schools.nsw.gov.au/about-our-school/enrolment.html>

