



## The Benefits of Sensory Play

From birth to early childhood, children use their five senses to explore and try to make sense of the world around them. As adults, our senses provide us with information that we use in decision making thousands of times a day, and while we barely notice this, helping children to learn about their own senses is so important and this is where sensory play comes in.

What is sensory play? Sensory play is any activity that stimulates a young child's senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing, as well as anything which engages movement and balance and this type of play has a wealth of benefits. Some of these benefits include;

- It helps to build nerve connections in the brain
- It encourages the development of motor skills
- It supports language development
- It encourages 'scientific thinking' and problem solving
- It can involve mindful activities which are beneficial for all children

Sensory activities are not only fun and interesting for children, but they also encourage children to explore and investigate the world around them.

Ideas for sensory play:

- Children love playing with playdough and this is a great sensory tool. Adding colour, sequins, even essential oils add an extra element which supports all sensory development, as well as being a tool children can use to relax with.
- Goop is a simple mix of water and cornflour but the result of this mix opens up a world of discovery! Is it liquid? Is it hard? Only you can discover when you experiment with it.
- Shaving cream. Not only does it feel soft, cold and warm, it also smells great. Add some baking soda and water, and it becomes snow!
- Kinetic sand. Again, it feels great, comes in a variety of colours and you can build with it, just like real sand.
- Water play. Adding food colour, bubble bath and some scent, enables the child to explore and play, using all their senses.



## June in Review 2022

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## Our Preschool Programme in Review

**Sweetpeas:** Oh what fun we have all been having in the garden. Finally we have had beautiful sunny days and the children have all loved exploring the outdoor area. We have had a very busy mud kitchen with many chefs cooking up a storm using bark, leaves, flowers and, of course the very important ingredients water and mud. Since our discovery time, during reconciliation week, the children explored the garden collecting bush tucker and cooking it on a pretend fire that we made in the garden. This led to a few little groups of children mixing bowls of interesting looking concoctions. There are so many benefits to engaging in messy play together. It supports communication and language development, helps build relationships with others, develops concentration and supports the ability to play independently to name only a few. We look forward to the messy play day planned during the school holidays where we will explore new sensory activities together. Play and exploring is learning for a child.

*"We may get dirty and a little wet while we are finding out about things –but if we make a discovery –then it's been worth it."*

**Bluebells:** We are already half way through the year and what a wonderful time we are having with our Bluebells! There is so much discovery going on every day with friendships being made, new skills being learned and mud pies being created and the children are embracing all that preschool life has to offer them. Over the past month, we have been developing our numeracy skills through a variety of activities. We have been discovering how far we can count when we lace beads onto a string and counting how many we have used, then proudly wearing these as necklaces! You can keep practicing this at home; ask your child to count out how many bowls you need for breakfast; when you go grocery shopping, ask your child to count out how many mandarins or bananas you need; when you are walking up stairs, count as you go. "Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning" (Fred Rogers).

**Schoolies:** As our service continues to implement actions from our new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the Schoolies have demonstrated a strong interest towards the opportunities they have been given to integrate Indigenous culture into their learning. This has included integrating a yarning stick into our group times as it is passed around and used to support, respect and empower each individual whilst speaking. The children love using our natural environment to explore Indigenous people's way of living. The children showed a great interest towards learning about bush tucker and were able to use their knowledge from group time learning to create their own Bush Tucker campfire out of natural materials in our outdoor environment. The children take part in Indigenous events, embedding and exploring the meaning behind our acknowledgement of country each morning. The children thank the Darug and Guringai people who are the traditional owners of the Mt Colah land through our Acknowledgement of Country. This is a practice in which has been embedded into our daily routine and provides the children with a deeper understanding of the land. Due to our recent success of winning the Woolworths Landcare Grant, our preschool will be introducing a bush tucker garden for the children to be able to utilise Australian native plants.



# Schoolies Excursion to the Post Office

Tuesday 7th June

The Schoolies embarked on their annual Post Office excursion. Prior to the excursion each child used their verbal communication skills to dictate a letter to a loved one. The children were encouraged to sign their letter and draw a picture if they chose. They then placed their letter in the envelope and sealed. As a group we discussed how the postal system works. We also discussed the postman's job and how the mail is sorted. An important discussion was then had around road safety and holding onto their assigned adults hand, as we were crossing and walking near busy roads. We then began the walk to the Post Office. Once there we purchased some stamps and with the assistance of wonderful volunteers we placed these on our envelopes. After this they were ready to approach the big red post box and mail their letter and have a look inside the Post Office, looking at all the packages. This excursion would not have been able to go ahead with the wonderful parent volunteers. Thank you for taking time out of your day to be involved in the preschool programme. (EYLF Principles: Partnerships With Families). This was a great opportunity for the children to explore their local community and make connections between themselves, their preschool and their loved ones. (EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world as they engage in their local environment).



# Schoolies Excursion to the Post Office

Tuesday June 7th

“ It was cool to see the post office truck” - Maddie L

“I loved posting my letter to Nanna” - Annabelle



**THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL PARENT VOLUNTEERS!**



**National Reconciliation Week** takes place from 27<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> June each year. National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia and Mt Colah Preschool is committed to ensuring the children are part of this.

This year's theme was "Be Brave. Make Change". It was important for the educators to discover what the children understood by this. Many discussions were had about how we sometimes have to be brave in order to do things differently and we shared many stories such as being brave on the climbing equipment at the park, so we can get to the slide. Playschool has a very informative episode called "Walking Together" and we watched bits of this together to further our understanding of what has happened in the past and how we can do things better to demonstrate that we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures and futures. We shared stories such as "Say Yes" about the 1967 Referendum and the changes in law that came soon after. "Somebody's Land" by Adam Goodes is a wonderful book that tells the children what happened in the past but also how we come together in the future. The children engaged so well with this book and by participating in discussions about it, what they could see and what they thought the book meant, they showed us their understanding of reconciliation.

We also listened to Indigenous music such as Taba Naba and Inanay and we used traditional tapping sticks in our music time too, discussing what these would be used for and how important they are in Indigenous culture.

Preschool also participated in the Sea Of Hearts Challenge and you may see some of these hearts in the foyer at preschool. Every family is invited to take a heart home, decorate it, write on it what Reconciliation means to you then bring it back to preschool where we will display these.

The knowledge gained and shared during Reconciliation Week will be highlighted in the preschool Reconciliation Action Plan which we are developing now.



# GREAT NEWS

We've just been awarded  
a Woolworths Junior  
Landcare Grant!



You may remember a few weeks ago we asked for your thoughts as we considered applying for a Junior Landcare Grant for a garden development project. Well, we are DELIGHTED to share with you that we have been successful with our application for a 2022 Woolworths Junior Landcare Grant for our project, LET'S GET GROWING!

Our plans include new fruit and vegetable growing areas and introducing more native plants and bush tucker to our garden. We also plan for more gardening tools and equipment which will allow the children to further develop skills in caring for the land, leading to a more sustainable future.

Mt Colah Preschool is one of 1,054 primary schools and early learning centres throughout Australia receiving a Woolworths Junior Landcare grant to help grow our next generation of environmental champions.

The children and educators are looking forward to working and learning from this project and we'll share our progress with you as we go.

You can read more about our project by clicking here <https://woolworthsgrantsmap.juniorlandcare.org.au/grant-round-4/lets-get-growing-2/>

We recently had Chris the Assistant Store Manager of Woolworths at Hornsby visit us to present us with a certificate for our Landcare Grant.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## FAIRY GARDEN

We were doing some garden maintenance and noticed one of our tyres down the back of the Preschool was looking a little worse for wear. We decided as we had a little fairy house we would begin to create a fairy garden. The children collected a variety of materials from our store room and placed new soil into the tyre. Only problem.. we had no fairies! We wondered if maybe when they saw the garden they would visit.. low and behold the next morning when we arrived at Preschool we had fairies in our garden!



## RETURN AND EARN

Thank you all for your help in deciding on a new charity for our Return and Earn Initiative. **We will be donating money earned to the very important Bear Cottage who look after the many families and children in their care.** Our fund keeps growing and hopefully we will have a substantial amount to donate by the end of the year. Thank you all for your contributions which helps the children understand the importance of recycling, caring for our planet and contributing to communities.





# Phonemic Awareness Programme

During the month of June, the children have been learning about the focus sounds /r/ and /l/. The Schoolies have been engaged in a variety of songs, stories, activities and craft experiences with the Letterland characters Red Robot and Lucy Lamp Light.

**Red Robot** At the start of the week, we found the /r/ sound quite difficult to produce when first being exposed to it through our Letterland character Red Robot. However with lots of repetition and activities that encouraged the pronunciation, the children were either close to mastering or had mastered producing the sound by the end of the fortnight. Our Speech Therapist Jo explained that this is a tricky sound and is not expected until the age of 5-6, so we weren't too concerned about mastering the sound however were happy to give it a go. Red Robot was a popular creation over the fortnight with the children eager to show their families our famous Letterland character. The children enjoyed constructing the robot using recycled materials, followed by decorating him with red materials brought in from home. Another engaging activity was making raspberry and rhubarb stew to be served with vanilla yoghurt. The children seemed to enjoy the taste of the tart yet sweet flavour, encouraging their families to try it.



**Lucy Lamp Light** While we learnt about the /l/ sound through our Letterland character Lucy Lamp Light, the children had the opportunity to make lovely lavender lemonade with Jo. This was a fun experience, encouraging the children to not only produce the /l/ sound in lavender and lemonade but also learn numeracy concepts such as measuring and counting. The children made lanterns using recycled glass jars in which they enjoyed decorating the table with. A popular discussion during our basics programme was about Sydney's light show, Vivid. We also looked at different lights in our world including Christmas lights, street lights, car lights and light houses. The children learnt about the light bulb inventor, Thomas Edison and imagined what life would be like without lights.





# Little Endeavours with Jo



Lots of collaboration between the children this month as we worked together to make our Red Robot, food and drinks for afternoon tea, and playdough we could take home. Many of the LE activities were based on the sound the preschoolers were focusing on in Letterland. The preschoolers worked as part of a group for all these activities and showed awareness of how we must think of others in shared experiences.



**Red Robot** – Each year we make a Red Robot when Letterland is focusing on the sound R, and each year the robot gets taller!! The preschoolers manipulated and experimented with our recycled items as we put our robot together and decorated it until we had a robot they were all happy with. They loved adding the items they had brought in from home and as they pass the robot they recognize and comment on their contribution to our group project.



**Damper** – As we made our damper (including a gluten free option) the children shared information they had learnt in discovery time, which was focusing on Bush Tucker and about how the Indigenous people made damper in the outback. We used rosemary from our garden. The children corrected me when I mentioned supermarkets and ovens which we use, telling me that was not available to the Aboriginals and it would have been cooked on a campfire, transferring their knowledge from our discovery time.

# Little Endeavours with Jo



**Lavender Lemonade** – Letterland was focused on the sound L. Liz and Janice from our local community gave us some lemons and lavender for our Lemonade.. The preschoolers loved the electric juicer we used in this activity – through trial and error they worked out the best way to hold the lemon onto it and enjoyed the bumpy feeling as they pushed down. When they tried our lemonade for afternoon tea they used great expressive language to tell us how it tasted. Most said it was 'spicy' but still wanted more.



**Pink and Purple Playdough** – Our playdough, which we made during the Letterland week focusing on P, inspired the preschoolers to use their knowledge of the sound to focus on P words as we made our playdough. We used numerical skills as we followed the recipe and measured the ingredients, and when the playdough was kneaded it was great exercise to strengthen hand and finger muscles.



## PARENT INFORMATION TABLE



Families, in our Preschool we have a Parent's Corner. This table provides information regarding child related matters, child safety, support services and events happening in the local area. Please take your time to browse and help yourself to any handouts. You will also find our Policies and Procedures Folder which you are able to access at any time. We regularly review these policies and would love family feedback on these if you are happy to do so, please let Lara know. Thank you :)

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

### FLOORBOOKS

After educator and family feedback we have decided to implement the use of floorbooks into our educational programme. We will be implementing this around July after educators do some training on effective implementation of floorbooks.

You can see some information and our plans on our QIP board in the foyer.



July 4th - July 15th—Holiday Programme

Monday July 18th —Feature Creatures Reptile Show (more information to come)

## 2023 Enrolments

During the month of July we will commence our enrolment process for the start of 2023 by asking our current families what days they would like their child to attend next year. We ask you to return your responses in a timely manner as we then move to our waiting list to fill the remainder of the placements. If you know of anyone who may be interested in attending Preschool next year, it would be wise to ask them to submit a Waiting List as soon as possible as our waitlist is quickly filling up.

## July Birthdays

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

Phoebe—5 Years

Maddie L—5 Years

Annabelle—5 Years

Max M—5 years

Frank—5 years

Remi—5 years

Ava—4 years

Mason—5 years

Lily C—5 years

