



THE ZONES OF REGULATION®

Over the month of March educators have been introducing the children to the 'Zones of Regulation' which in essence is a social and emotional learning framework and pathway to regulation. Being able to identify your emotions and learning how to manage them is one of the most important skills we can teach our children, especially in the early years. The four coloured zones help children visualise and determine what zone they may fit into depending on the emotion. The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone. The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone. The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs. The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.



March in Review 2024

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Our Preschool Programme in Review

Sweetpeas: Over the past month our Sweetpeas have shown a great interest in physical activity and outdoor play. They have been challenging their gross motor skills through a range of activities including creative dance experiences such as disco parties and ribbon twirling, indoor and outdoor obstacle courses, and wellness activities such as yoga and stretching circles. We have seen the children bond through these activities as they apply their imaginations to create fun new games together and support each other to overcome challenges. Another highlight of this month has been the Sweetpeas' first excursions to the Community Garden where they enjoyed searching the gardens for mini beasts, playing soccer and tennis, as well as playing on the big play equipment. These excursions provide the children with opportunities to develop their gross motor skills on a more challenging play equipment, build their confidence when facing new challenges and engage in risk-taking behaviours within a safe and controlled environment. We will continue to provide opportunities for children to engage in these experiences throughout the year.

Bluebells: This month has seen the children participating in a variety of activities designed to support the development of their fine motor skills. Fine motor skills are more than learning to write their name or using scissors. These skills begin to develop very early such as when your baby picks up their own toy for the first time. In order to be able to manage activities such as writing their name, children first have to develop the smaller muscle of the hands, and this happens through activities like construction, doing up buttons and opening lunch boxes. The Bluebells have been building these muscles through the use of playdough and clay, by squeezing and manipulating the dough into their creation, as well as learning to use tools such as rolling pins, cutters etc. The children have engaged in water play and by filling cups, jugs and a range of different sized containers with water and pouring water, these muscles continue to strengthen. Sand play is always popular at preschool, and also supports the development of fine motor skills, by using spades, filling buckets to scoop sand and dig with hands. Activities such as these are the precursor to your child being able to confidently write their name, cut out shapes, etc and we will continue providing these opportunities to further strengthen your child's abilities and self-confidence.

Schoolies:

We are very fortunate here at Mt Colah Preschool to have such an adventurous, welcoming and stimulating environment both inside and outside. Over the past three months, the Schoolie children have been able to showcase their developmental skills through a variety of activities and have been particularly engaged and interested in social/imaginative play that have been provided. A child's social skills enable them to form positive relationships, have conversations, develop body language, cooperate with others, share and play in a collaborative manner. Some of the social play spaces over the month have included, hairdressing, doctors, kitchen play, vets and campsites as well as the children creating characters and roles with the baby dolls and dress-ups throughout their play. We have seen many friendships blossom, improvements on the childrens overall social and language skills and most of all, the children sharing the spaces and having lots of fun throughout the day. We use educator mentoring during these experiences to guide the children when required to take turns, share the resources and to negotiate and compromise to ensure it remains a positive play experience for all children. We are so proud of the progress that has been made by all the Schoolie children over the past three months . Keep up the good work everyone :)



Life Cycles 4th March



What a busy week filled with exploring the life cycle of a butterfly, frog, chicken and silkworm! The children were able to closely analyse two butterfly chrysalises, exploring the changes over time. What an amazing experience the Monday children were able to be a part of as they watched a butterfly hatch from the chrysalis followed by drying it's wings as it prepared to enter our world. A few days later, the children whispered their wishes to the butterflies, followed by releasing them into the garden. We were also able to retrieve our silkworm eggs from the fridge (from last year's silk moths) and watch them hatch into tiny silkworms. Fortunately we have a mulberry tree for feeding them. The children enjoyed exploring the stages of life for multiple animals through photographs, stories, felt stories and props, including breaking the toy chickens free from the frozen eggs.



Living Eggs Experience

Monday 11th March—Friday 22nd March 2024



Monday was a very exciting day for the children as the chick eggs arrived! The children closely explored the incubator which was keeping the eggs nice and warm until they were ready to hatch. During our Discovery group time, the children began posing questions about the soon-to-be baby chicks, including **“Will the chicks all be brown?”** and **“What do they eat while inside the egg?”**. They were also excited to share their own experiences with chickens and connect this to their new knowledge —**“I have chickens at my home except mine lay blue eggs”**. On Tuesday morning, the children came into preschool very excited to discover that two baby chicks had hatched overnight!

The children watched on as the young wet chicks began to slowly dry up and stand on their two feet. Throughout the day, we closely observed the small breaks in the other eggs. Then just like that! Our 3rd baby chick arrived! This it was a black chick. What an amazing experience for the children to see the baby chick breaking free from the egg.

On Thursday morning we found three more baby chicks had hatched overnight. For the rest of the week and the following week, the children enjoyed practising safe handling of our baby chicks and loved assisting with the feeding process.

The children were so gentle, using all of their senses to engage with the chicks. This included learning how to tell if the chicks were a girl or a boy based on their feathers on their wings. We also saw the children’s confidence develop as the days progressed, creating a special bond between the children and chicks.

The children became responsible for ensuring the chicks were not too hot or too cold and had enough food and water. After many discussions about names, we decided on Huggle, Bob, Blackberry, Toastie, Cheeky, Unicorn and Elsa.

During our living eggs experience, we participated in many other activities to further extend our learning on the life cycle of chickens. This included stories, craft experiences, activities, puzzles

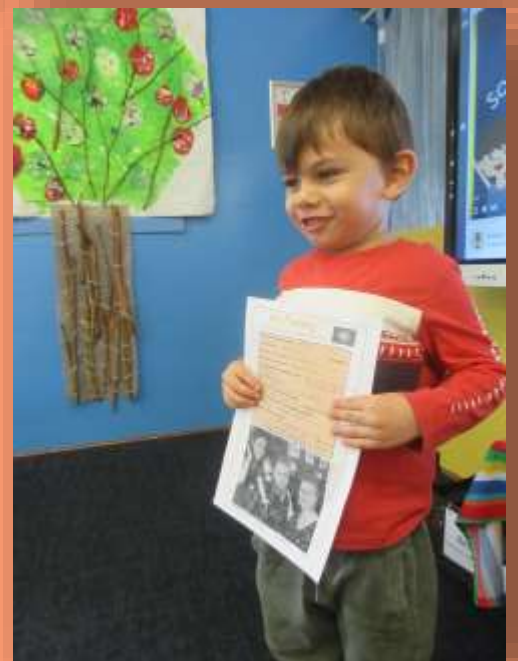


Living Eggs Experience



Harmony Week 18th March

This week the children had the opportunity to engage in a range of cultural experiences for Harmony Week. The children and educators shared various items, clothes and pictures that represented their cultural backgrounds and enjoyed sharing information about their families via the Harmony Day family posters. We were lucky to engage in many cooking (and tasting!) experiences across the week which included cheese and vegemite scrolls, South African pancakes, sticky rice and tomato sauce pasta. During the week we practiced singing 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' in Italian and counting to 10 in Spanish, as well as learning some new words from our family visitors. The week also included many other cultural experiences such as a virtual climb up Mt Fuji in Japan via our Smartboard and creating our flag display which represents the diversity within our preschool family this year.



Harmony Week

18th March



QIP Cultural Responsiveness

Cultural Words of the Week for March

Mariposa—Butterfly—Spanish

Tomago—Egg—Japanese

Moa—Chicken—Tongan

Pasqua—Easter—Italian



As mentioned in our last newsletter, as part of our Quality Improvement Plan the preschool is working on embedding Cultural Responsiveness into our daily practice.

We have been so lucky this month to have family and community involvement to help us with this, exposing the children to opportunities to recognise different words of languages other than English.

Uta and Hinata are two Japanese exchange students who were staying with Freddie's family. They came in one afternoon and taught the children some words in Japanese and then showed us how to make origami.

Lara's Mum Giovanna (Jo) came in and taught the children some Italian words, learning more about Italian culture, landmarks and food.

Hunter's Dad Justin came in and he and Hunter taught us some Australian animal words from the Anaiwan mob and shared more about their culture.



Little Endeavours with Jo and Adele

Spider webs – As a follow up activity from our stitching of the trunk for Annie the Apple Tree we threaded spider webs (with a spider attached) while learning about Mini Beasts. Fine motor skills were used to thread the needle back and forth through the holes of the paper plate, with the preschoolers also having to concentrate on not pulling the wool too tight. They were so engaged in the activity most chose to thread their web twice.



Butterfly Magnets – While discussing lifecycles in Discovery time and with the Schoolies practising the /M/ sound in Letterland we put them both together and made Magnetic Butterflies. Fingers worked hard to fold the patty pans into quarters and then receptive language skills were required as the preschooler's followed instructions on how to add the wings to the wooden peg. We will follow up this activity with some baking in the coming weeks as there was much discussion on what we usually use patty pans for.



Little Endeavours with Jo and Adele

Chicken Lifecycle Display – With our living eggs delivered and starting to hatch there was great excitement as we worked together to create our Chicken Lifecycle display. There was much discussion about whether it was the hen or the egg that began the cycle and the children confidently put their point of view forward. Their fingers coloured and cut out the pieces we needed and then, with referral to an example picture, the preschoolers collaborated together to glue everything down. They enjoyed tracing the lifecycle around, realising there was no end to it.



Harmony Day Flags—In celebrating Harmony week, the children helped paint bunting flags from the different countries we all originate from. This year we have 26 different cultures within our preschool community to celebrate and discover all that is important to us. Using the iPad, the children looked at flags and colours used in many different countries making sure to paint them correctly.





Phonemic Awareness Programme



During the month of March, the Schoolies have been learning about the focus sounds /m/ and /i/. The children have been engaged in a variety of songs, stories, activities and craft experiences with the Letterland characters Munching Mike and Impy Ink.



While exploring the /m/ sound, the children focused on the topic magnetism allowing them to make predictions, experiment and investigate using magnets. We discovered magnetic and non-magnetic materials throughout our environment. We even made magnet butterflies for our fridges with Jo. To continue exploring the /m/ sound, we made mango milkshakes, with the children finding **Max's mango milkshake moustache** very funny (lots of /m/ words too). Lastly, the children had the opportunity to make monster hand crafts with Taylah.



During the fortnight of Impy Ink, the children investigated the country Italy with Giovanna (Jo) (Lara's Mum). Giovanna shared her knowledge on the Italian culture including the language, iconic landmarks and food (great timing while we celebrated Harmony Week). Throughout the fortnight, the children engaged in activities such as ink stamping and instruments to continue to develop their /i/ pronunciation.





Mini Moves



Munch & Move is a NSW Health initiative that supports the healthy development of children birth to 5 years by promoting physical activity and healthy eating. Mini Moves is an element of this programme, where the Sweetpeas and Bluebells learn and develop fundamental movement skills. Every two weeks, the educators introduce a new skill, which we then learn and practice, until the children are confident in their abilities. The skill is demonstrated, broken down and used in games, giving the children lots of opportunities to develop this skill. At the end of a skill development, the children will be presented with a small certificate, before a final certificate at the end of the year, acknowledging all the skills that have been learned.

Our skills so far this term have been:

- ♥ Running. The children practiced their running skills, using their arms to propel themselves along. Races were popular when practicing this one!
- ♥ Jumping. During this one, the children practiced bending their knees before jumping. We loved using the trampoline to develop this one, as well as jumping to paint our hands on the paper.
- ♥ Underarm throwing. While learning this one, the children had to ensure their arm went behind them, before swinging it forward and releasing the ball. We used a target on the wall to practice this one.
- ♥ Overarm throwing. Our last one this term is slightly different to underarm throwing, but we still swung our arm back before releasing the ball, up and over our shoulders.





The Preschool seeks to create a safe and supportive environment for the children who attend and for their families. To this end, the Preschool ensures that processes are in place to identify harm or suspected harm to a child and that the Preschool's response is lawful, professional, and immediate. In New South Wales, legislation requires educators to report any risk of harm to a child, as they are mandatory reporters. Educators uphold the wellbeing and safety of children at all times.

Together the team of educators have created their own commitment to child safety. This is on display on our notice board.

Mt Colah Preschool's Commitment to Child Safety

- The safety and wellbeing of children will always be our first priority; it is fundamental to their ability to learn and develop.
- We are committed to building relationships with children and families that allow them to feel safe and supported in our service.
- We are committed to the participation and empowerment of all children.
- We support and respect all children and uphold their rights to feel and be safe at all times.
- We have zero tolerance for child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently within our roles as Mandatory Reporters.
- We follow our duty of care and legal obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety.
- Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- We will ensure that there is an appropriate screening process for all staff, and volunteers and that they have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC).
- Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating staff, and volunteers on child abuse risks and how to interact and behave with children.
- We are committed to providing and promoting safe environments for all children, including vulnerable children, where they feel safe.
- We are committed to providing and promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We are committed to ensuring that all stakeholders involved in our service understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- We have in place policies and procedures which focus on the safety of children, relationships, and positive interactions. Ensuring we are always following these.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS

EMERGENCY
ASSEMBLY
POINT

This month we have been conducting our quarterly evacuation drills at Preschool and we thought it would be a good time to talk about emergency situations that may occur in your home with your children. Some great questions to ask and discuss in an emergency are:

- * **What number do you call in an emergency and who would you ask for?**
- * **What suburb do you live in? Even more importantly, teach your child their address.**

*** What state do you live in?**

- * **If there is a fire at your house where should you try and get to ?**

The mailbox is usually a good meeting place for the family in an emergency situation.

During these drills the children follow educators instructions as we walk up to our Emergency Assembly Point in the Community Garden. If you are ever here whilst we are conducting an emergency drill please also follow educators instructions.

April Birthdays

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



Max G—5 years

