

Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



a caring place to learn and grow

We hope you have all enjoyed your start to the Preschool year and are starting to settle into our daily routines. The children are enjoying meeting new friends and reuniting with old friends. They continue to astound us with their curiosity and enthusiasm to learn. If you have any questions at all please see your child's educator. We encourage you to read our Newsletter each month as it contains articles on child development, information on the many learning activities the children have been involved in and upcoming events.



February in Review 2022

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Our Preschool Programme in Review

Sweetpeas: We have had a really good start to the year with our new Sweetpeas settling in well. The children are coping with many new challenges and routines as we negotiate our way through the day. We all have so much to learn about each other and it is lovely to watch the children engaging and interacting with friends and teachers. We have enjoyed spending time on drawing activities, exploring the garden and playing together, as we develop our social skills of turn taking and sharing with one another. The children are beginning to understand that being considerate and kind is a sure way to make friends. I have witnessed some wonderful acts of kindness from making sure friends are included in play, to helping someone in need. It is so important for everyone to feel they belong. Once children feel happy and comfortable in their environment, learning can happen with ease.

A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference.' - Eeyore

Bluebells: What a great start to the year we have had! Adele and Deon have been very impressed at how well everyone has settled in and becoming very confident Bluebells already. We have spent lots of time getting to know each other, discovering favourite colours, what pets we have at home, our favourite food and who is in our family, and the children have confidently shared this information with each other. As a group, we have played games such as Duck Duck Goose and Pass the Bone, which help support our knowledge of each others names, as well as learning how to take turns. These activities also support the development of our social skills, as we learn to interact and engage with each other and begin to make early friendships.



Schoolies: This month the Schoolies have been spending lots of time outside enjoying the sunshine and getting to know one other. We are so pleased to share with you that many of the children both old and new have already begun forming new friendships while also strengthening old ones. This month educators have enjoyed supporting the children in developing their social skills by mentoring them during play time and providing learning opportunities that promote social skills, more specifically by role modelling acts of kindness, fostering emerging friendships and making sure the physical environment is set up in a way that allows children to learn and socialise while most importantly having fun. This month we have noticed the sandpit, see saw and the home corner have all been a successful catalyst when it came to promoting the children's social skills in our Preschool environment. It is in environments like this that children can develop important social skills such as sharing, turn taking, expressing and respecting the ideas of one another and negotiating shared play spaces while positively interacting with one another.





Chinese New Year



Throughout the first week of February we celebrated Chinese New Year, the official year of the Tiger. This is an important festival celebrated by many of our Preschool families. Jasmina shared some photos from her Chinese New Year celebrations. Bianca brought in some special mementos, a toy tiger and a red wallet. Both girls shared stories and traditions that their families take part in, in light of the Lunar New Year. The children loved asking questions and listened respectfully to the children sharing interesting aspects of Chinese and Asian culture through visuals and group discussions.

It is an important part of our educational programme for children and families to share their culture as we explore diversity through culture, heritage, background and tradition within our community (**EYLF Learning Outcome 1 and 2**)

During group time we spent time exploring traditional Chinese New Year dance and music, in particular Dragon and Lion Dancing. The children also had the opportunities to play on the drums and express themselves through traditional Chinese music while the other children pretended to be the Dragon dancing to the beat of the drums and cymbals. Later in the week we even learnt a few words in Mandarin. We learnt how to say hello (Ni Hao) as well as the days of the week.

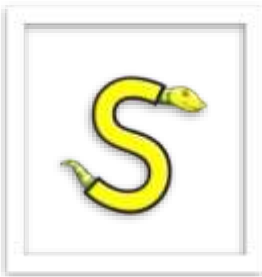
Educators also provided opportunity for children to further explore Chinese culture through resources such as puzzles, books, music and crafts. Happy Chinese New Year!





Phonemic Awareness Programme

Our Phonemic Awareness Programme is based on the Letterland Programme. Each fortnight we meet a new resident of Letterland who introduces us to a new letter/sound. We then have a lot of fun engaging with and producing that sound through stories, singing and hands on activities. In recent weeks the children have had the chance to meet Sammy Snake and Annie Apple!



What a brilliant start to the year, commencing our Letterland programme! The children have had so much fun learning about the letter/sound S over the past fortnight. We have read stories, sung songs and explored words starting with /s/ through our online basics programme. We have also been focusing on the topic Sun Safety to not only educate the children about keeping our bodies safe from the sun but also providing them with opportunities to continue to produce the /s/ sound in words such as sunscreen, sunglasses and sun.



The children have enjoyed engaging in learning experiences such as applying sunscreen to the babies at 'the beach', checking the sun's UV by using the Google nest and pretending to be at the beach while playing in the sandpit, ensuring they are seeking shade under the cabana, wearing hats and sunglasses and applying sunscreen. We also created a Sunscreen Station, building the children's independence by applying sunscreen on their own. The children have expressed their creativity through craft experiences such as creating suns as well as experimenting with the sun's energy through sunscreen paintings!





The Schoolies are now focusing on the letter/sound A with our Letterland character Annie Apple. We have been engaging in learning experiences that encourage the children to produce the /a/ sound such as pegging the felt apples on the apple tree, creating red apples using the play dough and strengthening our ability to recognise and write the letter a using our Letterland activity sheets. During group times, the children have read stories such as Mr Brown's Magnificent Apple Tree, discussed the life cycle of an apple tree and made slinky apples!. The children have had the opportunity to express their creativity by working together to create a huge apple tree which is on display in our classroom.

This week we look forward to continuing to process and produce the sound /a/ with a focus on animals that start with A, in particular alligators. The children will also have the opportunity to express their creativity by working together to create a huge apple tree with Jo which will be on display in our classroom.

EYLF LO 5.1—Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

EYLF Practice: Learning through Play—Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine .





Little Endeavours Program



LE is back for the year and our first project is a wonderful way for me to get to know the new preschoolers and to catch up with our returning preschoolers. They were all happy to chat as they worked on their piece of bunting which they created to look like themselves. I learnt lots about their families and what they had all done over the Christmas break.

The bunting is now hanging in the preschool and the children love looking for themselves and seeing the other bunting children holding hands with them, often asking who they are holding hands with.

LE is activities including art, craft, cooking and gardening where the children work both on their own, and together as a group, developing and practicing skills in readiness for when they start school. I look forward to all the fun we will have together this year.



We have also learnt about growing our own produce, so in LE we planted bean seeds in recycled CD cases or clear cups. The children can watch the seeds sprout and grow and then plant in their home gardens or veggie patches. It is a great learning experience as usually all this happens below the ground and can't be observed. We would love to see photos of your seed's growth.



DINOSAURS



It was clear early on this year that the children have a strong interest in dinosaurs. Educators extended this interest and during our discovery times and free play we further explored Dinosaurs.

Children were invited to bring their own dinosaur resources from home to share with their friends and we thank families for their engagement in this. It provided the children the opportunity to build their confidence to share in front of groups.

The children confidently shared their knowledge of dinosaurs with each other, talking about their favourite dinosaurs (the Tyrannosaurus Rex appears to be a favourite!) and which ones were carnivores (T-Rex) and which ones were herbivores (Brachiosaurus). We also talked about the bunya nut which Aboriginal people cook and eat and which was also a dinosaur snack 65 million years ago! Wow!



SUSTAINABILITY

Veggie Patch Produce

Wow what a month it has been down in the garden! Never before have we seen such goodness come from our veggie patches and we are truly thrilled at what the children have discovered over the past month. From enormous cucumbers and purple beans to an abundance of both tiny and huge tomatoes, our veggie patches really have been the gift that keeps on giving. Each week the children visit the patches with an educator and are never left empty handed. Educators have noticed the children this year have been particularly enjoying watering and tending to all the gardens each week. Teaching children to garden is as important as teaching them how to swim! It gives them time to be active and experience nature. It can also be a great tool to teach valuable life lessons. Children who garden develop self sufficiency, a knowledge about where their food comes from, and patience. They also learn science. They can measure how far apart to plant seeds as well as learning about the life cycle of plants.



Together we
Return
and Earn!



This month we have raised \$30.80 thanks to all the families who have brought in bottles and cans with the '10c' mark as part of our Return and Earn bottle collection here at Preschool. Josh, Nick, Grace and Rory helped teacher Maddie sort through all the bottles and count them one by one, ready to make a drop to the local post office in Berowra, where we then earn 10c per bottle as part of the government initiative. We thank you again and towards the end of the term we will invite both families and children to help us decide what charity we will donate the earnings to.



Munch & Move is a NSW Health initiative that supports the healthy development of children birth to 5 years by promoting physical activity, healthy eating and reduced small screen time. Here at Preschool we use the Munch and Move Program for a variety of reasons.

The Sweetpeas and Bluebells engage in a Fundamental Movement Skills Program in which they are supported to learn a new movement skill each fortnight. Fundamental movements skills is an important part of a child's early development. They help children improve their strength, posture and sleep, and enhance their confidence, social skills and sense of achievement. This month we have been working on our jumping and running skills by engaging in activities like jumping hop-scotch, leap frog and running relays.



Munch and Move Sharing Bag

During the year your family may receive our 'Munch and Move' sharing bag. This bag promotes physical play and encourages you to get outside as a family. The bag contains some resources and books about the importance of healthy lifestyle. Families are asked to share some photos of an experience in which they engage in physical play, this is then shared with the group.

The Benefits of Outdoor and Physical Play



Here at Preschool we are lucky to have a large outdoor environment. Spending time in the outdoors environment amongst nature is important in developing a range of areas for your child. This includes but it not limited to

- Children develop decision making
- Enables children to re-enact life experiences
- Encourages children to develop and co-ordinate hand/eye movements
- Helps children develop gross motor skills (climbing, swinging, jumping etc).
- Children have a better understanding of spatial awareness (swinging, climbing up, down, over or under).
- Develops children's balance (using the balance equipment, walking on different surfaces).
- Increases children's vocabulary (learning new names for natural objects, plants, birds animals).
- Demonstrates children's social skills (participating in social play with other children).
- While outside, children are using all their senses to discover their world. Children see leaves changing colour, touch trees, hear birds or simply smell the air.



Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

This month we have been practicing our lockdown procedures with the children. This aims to provide a safe and secure environment for our educators, children, families and visitors to the centre in the event of a threat, dangerous situation or natural disaster within the community. Further, the Preschool aims to minimise the risk of harm or the exposure to danger for anyone on the premises through the implementation of this procedure. The children have all done a great job of following the educators instructions during these times as we practice a variety of pretend scenarios from medical emergencies to snake sightings. If you are ever present during a lockdown drill please follow educators instructions. On days when we are practicing a drill you will notice a sign on the iPad to notify families that a lockdown drill will be taking place. **We value family feedback and throughout the year you may be asked for feedback on a variety of topics within the Preschool. We appreciate any feedback that can help us improve.**



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 is available now, with all the information you need to place an order. Please see Deon if you have any questions.



March Birthdays

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

Matthew—4 years

Magnus—4 years

Sam—3 Years

Educator Jo

Educator Maddie



An Anecdote from the playground...

While making her way across a gross motor course outdoors, Harper turned around to see someone having difficulty balancing over the small ring frame on the ground. Harper bent down to steady the frame 'Are you okay?' she asked softly. What a wonderful act of kindness Harper.



March 21st—Harmony Week—We will be asking for family input this week and would love for you to share aspects of your culture (Notes to come)

March 23rd—Speech Screening with Jo Diment

March 28th—Walkathon Fundraiser Week (Information to come)

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