

# Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



*a caring place to learn and grow*



## Learning Stories

Play is very powerful and is at the centre of our educational programme. The children, through play, apply the knowledge they have and extend and build on that knowledge. Our programme includes many areas of interest and these are chosen by a combination of educator, child, and parent input as well as including special events both local, nationally and globally recognised. Importantly the opportunity for spontaneous exploration also occurs. As the educators work with the children, either through spontaneous learning and investigation or intentional teaching, they are able to observe how the children strengthen their skills and build their knowledge, providing the opportunity for the children to ask questions, and guide the children in a variety of ways to find answers in their quest for knowledge.

These observations are recorded as Learning Stories by the educators and displayed at the Preschool. We encourage parents and family members to read these regularly to give you information on how your children are learning and how much they are enjoying the process of learning. The Learning Stories will also highlight the Educator's role and will also link the learning being recorded to early childhood theory and practice and the Early Years Learning Framework. All Learning Stories can be found in a book at the daily diary table.



## Manners Maketh Man

It has been wonderful to see how well the children are settling into the Preschool year and also so wonderful to see how well they use their manners. Please, thank you and sometimes even excuse me can be heard. Educators encourage children to use their manners however the need is becoming less and less.

It is also lovely to see how the new children have quickly settled into the daily routine and happily follow along, often advising educators of what is coming next. We often talk about our Preschool Rules as it is important for children to understand boundaries and the children do a great job and try really hard to follow them.



# April 2017

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## *Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review*

**Sweetpeas** There are so many new skills and challenges the Sweetpeas are learning. First and most importantly being away from parents and working together with other adults and children, sharing, cooperating and learning simple rules and routines. The children are doing so well with these new challenges as they negotiate their way through the day. These skills are all needed to help us grow into happy healthy people. During our developmental time, we have enjoyed learning about each other and our families. We have found that there are many things we have in common, which help form important friendships. We have had fun exploring physical activity during a special group time each day, where we get to practice and develop fundamental movement skills and the confidence children need to enjoy physical activities at school. With the weather keeping us indoors most days, we have managed to do these activities indoors which have been so much fun to help keep us active and burn off all the endless energy the children always seem to have.

**Bluebells:** We are coming to the end of Term 1 already and what an exciting few weeks we have had! The Bluebells are proving to be a very enthusiastic group of learners who are embracing what preschool life has to offer them. We saw evidence of this during our recent Green Week activities. During this week, the staff and children shared lots of ideas on how we can look after our planet. Recycling was brought up by many and the children appeared to have a very good awareness of why we should recycle, even knowing which coloured bins we should put our rubbish into. Did you know we have a worm farm at preschool? We talk regularly about what the worms like to eat and the children are encouraged to put their fruit and veg scraps into a different bin to feed the worms. **When Sophie W first met the worms she declared they were "a little bit yucky but helpful in the garden"**. During Green Week, we were very enthusiastic helpers as we helped Jo dig out some of the veggie patch and plant some new seeds. We are looking forward to our new beans, tomatoes and strawberries growing! Sustainability practice is an important part of our preschool programme and one which the children are taking very seriously!

**Schoolies:** The Schoolies have really enjoyed 'Harmony Week'. At group time we have talked about living harmoniously in Australia as we have such a large, culturally diverse society and we discussed how lucky we are to have it that way. We looked at how people from other cultures have introduced their culture to Australia through their food, clothes and music. The Schoolies enjoyed dancing to music from different cultures such as Indian, Irish and the Hula. They also enjoyed imaginative play pretending to make and serve sushi with the sushi set. We made flags of all the different countries we have represented by families here at Preschool which will be hung up soon. The Schoolies have also enjoyed looking at and sharing information with each other from their 'My Family' sheets on display. The interest the family sheets have stimulated has helped the children develop and extend their self-identities. It has been lovely to see the Schoolies revisiting the world map and globe and asking some great questions about many different countries as their curiosity extends their knowledge of the world around them.



# MISSING IN ACTION

Please search your home for **Preschool Show and Tell Bags** and return to **Preschool** as soon as possible...we are desperately low on bags. **Thank you!**



**April Holiday Programme**—the fun is **supercharged** in our planning for the April holiday programme. Please let your child's teacher know if you would like to come along and participate—**we would love to see you!**

**Scholastic Book Club** Thank you for all the recent orders. These have now been submitted and we are expecting a delivery any day now. With the commission from the last order, we bought some new books for Preschool including **"I'm Australian Too"** by Mem Fox which was a lovely book to share during Harmony Week. The next book club leaflet will be out in Term 2.



## Finally Revealed!

It was the afternoon and Sophie W's mum had just arrived to pick her up. Sophie had a cookie in her bag which she had made during the day with Jo. Sophie proudly grabbed the cookie out of her bag and said to her mum **"See, I told you the teachers were nice"**.

## April Birthdays'

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

Alex Z

Liam S

Lianna

Adelaide

Dakota

Amelie

Hollie

Nena

Cassie's Birthday ????





# Excursion to the Post Office—Wednesday March 8th



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, sealed it and applied a stamp. As a group we discussed how the postal system works. We discussed why we write addresses and postcodes on our envelopes as well as 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 each child stood in front of their peers holding up their envelope and telling the group who they had written their letter to. After this they were ready to approach the big red post box and mail their letter. During this process, we had a special visit from the postman himself. He allowed us to have a closer look at his bike and showed us the compartments he keeps all the mail in. He told the children he has to wear his fluoro yellow uniform as a safety precaution so that drivers can see him.

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).*





Our Healthy Habits initiative is to support our Quality Improvement Plan item - *focussing on family and child health*. During April we will focus on healthy food and in particular, minimising packaged foods.

## THE START of a new school year sees the standard 'healthy' school lunch box recommendations fill magazines and health blogs.

While this may suit a few super-organised parents, for others getting the lunch box balance right becomes more of a battle between what kids will eat and what quick and easy options you can find at the supermarket. And while many of us are aware that packaged snack options and white bread sandwiches are not the best options, the biggest issue with school lunch boxes is rarely discussed — that the average school lunch box contains far too much refined carbohydrate which in turn leaves our kids unsatisfied, prone to overeating and excessive weight gain.

While growing, active kids need plenty of energy, energy in the form of processed, high sugar carbs such as fruit snacks, juices, snack bars and biscuits are digested quickly, resulting in a high release of the hormone insulin and leaving kids prone to overeating and weight gain long term. A study completed several years back with Melbourne schoolchildren found on average lunch boxes contained three packaged snacks — bars, bites, twists and dips which offered little nutritionally except empty calories. Such findings suggested Aussie kids were eating far too many processed carbs at school each day at the expense of nutrient rich, filling foods.

It is this very reason that children return home at 3-4pm each day absolutely ravenous, simply as their digestive hormones are far less likely to be keeping them full and satisfied. Overeating after school then leaves young children less likely to eat their dinner, a dinner of meat and vegetables that they need to get all of their essential nutrients and leaves their overall nutritional intake less than ideal.

This does not mean that you need to add slabs of meat to your child's lunch box to improve the nutritional balance. Focusing a couple of core aspects of the lunch box around nutrient rich, protein based foods and vegetables with far fewer processed snack foods is the way to go. Following this simple lunch box formula will make achieving this balance exceptionally easy.

**Wholegrain Sandwich or wrap**— where possible add a protein rich filling to your child's sandwich — egg, lean meat or cheese.

**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable**—full of fibre and nutrients and teaches your child about fresh food

**Protein snack**—great protein-rich lunch box fillers include cheese sticks, yoghurt tubes, milk-based drinks or roasted broadbeans and chick peas.

**Nutritious snacks**—Good options include popcorn, small wholegrain crackers with topping. Naturally you can avoid packaged snacks altogether if you prefer and instead pack home-made mini muffins, banana bread or other baked goods.

**Water**—Water should always be the drink of choice for children. Fruit juice, soft drinks, sports drinks and cordials are high in sugar and should be avoided entirely.

(Article Source: <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/parenting/school-life/the-biggest-issue-with-school-lunch-boxes/news-story/4354189b0124bc2b151d2e3258da747b>)







# Fun with Phonics

*The Schoolies have really enjoyed meeting Clever Cat and Bouncy Ben!*



Clever Cat is a very clever talking cat who lives in Letterland. Clever Cat enjoys picnics where she eats crunchy carrots and catches caterpillars. Clever Cat makes a special sound that we hear at the start of her name. During our phonics programme the children really enjoyed making Clever Cat's special 'c' sound. The children also enjoyed listening to Steph and Zoe making stories up about Clever Cat and what she likes. Soon after the children were quick to join in and identified 'c' words that were incorporated into our story. The Schoolies loved the story telling and did a fantastic job pairing Clever Cat with 'c' sounds. For example Clever Cat was on a picnic and Zoe asked "What could she eat while on a picnic?" With minimal assistance Cade said "Crunchy cucumber" while Anurina added "Corn". Well done Schoolies! We also read 'Cat in the Hat' which opened our Schoolies up to rhyming words in a fun and engaging manner that they really enjoyed. Any rhyming books read at home or rhymes made up will support the development of your child's phonemic awareness. We also provided a nature based feely box with items starting with Clever Cat's special 'c' sound. We found a caterpillar in the box, which was Clever Cat's friend and then we read 'The Very Hungry caterpillar'. We also conducted the "colour experiment". The Schoolies poured water into a container and chose the food colouring that was also poured in and then placed the celery stalks into the container. We hypothesised about what might happen and Charlotte B said "It will change colours". The next day we checked on our experiment and the celery had changed colours, as the celery had absorbed the coloured water.



Bouncy Ben is a very energetic bunny that lives in Letterland. This week we have enjoyed getting to know him and singing the Bouncy Ben song that helps us make Bouncy Ben's special 'b' sound. The Schoolies LOVED drawing pictures that start with Bouncy Ben's sound on our new computer after the Letterland program. Bower drew "Balloons" and Amber drew a "Boat". Next week to delve into Bouncy Ben's sound further we will bounce balls, play basketball, go on a bear hunt and play the bean bag game 😊





Another busy month in Little Endeavours with most activities having the Preschooler's working together to achieve the outcome - focusing on the veggie patch and cooking.



**GREEN WEEK** - The veggie patch needed a clean up so we all helped to trim the rosemary plant and pulled out the weeds ready for planting new crops. The children also took home some rosemary for cooking – most of them commenting on the smell of it.



**ALL ABOUT ME** – Everyone enjoyed the process of making their own cookie and then decorating them in the afternoon with a face of their choice. Children helped each other and talked about their baking experiences at home.



**STORYTIME** – We turned the soil of the cleared veggie patch and planted some seeds (carrots, snap peas, radishes). We discussed how Jack's seeds (Jack and The Beanstalk) grew and what conditions were best. Since then the children have worried that we have had too much rain and not enough sun!!!



**HARMONY WEEK** – Using a recipe shared by a parent, from our 2014 Harmony Week Cookbook, we used up soft bananas given to us by Lara's mum to make banana bread for afternoon tea. Everyone helped in the process, taking turns to measure and add ingredients and mix the batter.



*The children have really enjoyed working with their friends over the past month and have helped each other out when needed. We have had many conversations during LE time with the Preschooler's sharing information about themselves and their families.*







## Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

An area of focus in our QIP is to provide Educators training to support our endeavour for quality improvement within our learning environment and extend our professional knowledge as individuals. Educators have now been booked into a variety of professional training courses and workshops for 2017. Whilst this training is primarily aimed at providing individual professional development and supporting and extending our educational programme and environment this is also an important opportunity to allow educators to network within the early learning and education industry.



## Dates to Remember!

April 10—21st

Holiday Programme

Friday, April 14th

Easter Friday—Preschool Closed

Monday, April 17th

Easter Monday—Preschool Closed

Tuesday, April 25th

Anzac Day—Preschool Closed



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