

# Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



*a caring place to learn and grow*

## Fine Motor Skills are so Important.....

Fine motor skills involve the use of the smaller muscle of the hands, commonly in activities like using pencils, scissors, construction with lego or duplo, doing up buttons and opening lunch boxes. Fine motor skill efficiency significantly influences the quality of the task outcome as well as the speed of task performance. Efficient fine motor skills require a number of independent skills to work together to appropriately manipulate the object or perform the task.



Fine motor skills are essential for performing everyday skills as mentioned as well academic skills. Without the ability to complete these every day tasks, a child's self esteem can suffer, their academic performance is compromised and their play options are very limited. They are also unable to develop appropriate independence in 'life' skills (such as getting dressed and feeding themselves) which in turn has social implications not only within the family but also within peer relationships.

Hand dominance simply refers to the fact that most children gravitate toward one hand or the other as their "strong" hand – the hand that is better at performing complex tasks. A child may have difficulty determining the dominant hand due to switching hands because of weakness, or their ability to cross the midline. When determining the dominant hand allow the child to choose and then encourage them to complete fine motor activities (e.g. writing their names, cutting on a line) using the same hand they initiated with. This is a good way for kids to get experience with both hands and to start to get a feel for which hand is stronger. No need to force a decision, over time the child will get a feel for which hand feels stronger and more able.

### ***Build Fine Motor Strength at Home—Have fun with it!***

- Give the children chalk to draw on pavers and fences
- Give them a small bucket of water and an appropriate size paint brush and they can then paint anything outside—house walls, pavers, fences
- Colouring in—try templates of their favourite characters to promote interest or free drawing
- Supply some old magazines and scissors and they can create a collage
- Small piece construction
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Threading pasta



## August 2021

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## Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

**Sweetpeas:** It has been wonderful to see how the children have adapted to the lockdown procedures enforced again. Their resilience at being dropped off at the gate never ceases to amaze me. The children are demonstrating new self-help skills as they say goodbye to Mums and Dads, choose lockers and get to unpack their morning tea and lunch containers themselves, giving them a sense of accomplishment. For quite some time now the morning discovery times have been split into two groups with the Sweetpeas and Bluebells having a separate discovery time from the Schoolies. This has been a valuable time spent together and we are finding out so much about each other. Children who are normally quiet have found their voice and have been excited to contribute to questions and answers. These times enable the Sweetpeas to understand and absorb information given in a simpler way as they gain confidence without being overshadowed. We are all enjoying these fun times spent together. *'What we learn with pleasure we never forget'* - Alfred Mercer

**Bluebells:** Here we are at the start of Term 3 and we are looking forward to another busy few weeks! We have just enjoyed the July holiday programme full of activities such as dress up days, cooking, winter wonderland and Bluey. Another of our days was Science day which was planned due to the children's increasing interest in magnets and how these work. During the day, the children engaged in experiments that explored static using balloons and rubbing these on our hair which created lots of laughing! We made a volcano explode using vinegar, bicarbonate of soda and food colouring and talked about the ingredients reacting to each other. We watched as Lara and Maddie poured a packet of Mentos into a bottle of Coke and couldn't believe how far the Coke exploded into the air! We also enjoyed some hands on discovery playing with gloop, a mixture of cornflour and water which encouraged discussions around solids and liquids. You can make this at home for your child to explore (it's a good outside activity!) and this is also a great sensory activity. Science day was enjoyed by everyone and as this continues to be an ongoing interest, we will be participating in National Science Week in August to further explore our ideas.

**Schoolies:** The Schoolies have fully immersed themselves in our recent topic of dinosaurs. It has been evident through our various discussions and hands on experiences that the children extended their knowledge of dinosaurs in particular the facts and features of different dinosaurs and the theories around their extinction. We also discussed the role that Palaeontologists play in helping us understand the life of dinosaurs from 65 million years ago! Throughout the fortnight educators further extended the children's interest through a variety of experiences and play spaces set up in the environment. We observed the children transfer their new knowledge from our group time discussions to their play as they shared facts with each other, became palaeontologist's and went in search of fossils. The Schoolies were curious, engaged and enthusiastic learners throughout this topic, and as educators it was a pleasure to observe.





## Book Week is Coming! Week of August 23rd.

**We are setting a Bookweek challenge.** We would like families to keep a record of all the books you read to your child between now and the start of Book Week. During Book Week we will have a display where we will ask you to put the Title and Author of your child's favourite book. We will then share this list in the next Newsletter to give you all some new ideas for future reading. **Have fun reading!**

## Scholastic Book Club

Issue 5 is now available and we ask that all orders are placed by Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August. There is a printing error on the front of the magazine which says 2020 but it is the latest edition.



Orders can be placed using the LOOP app or you can return the form with the money to preschool. Delivery is free and 20% of all book orders comes back to the preschool to use to buy books and resources. If you have any questions about book club, please see Deon.

## August Birthdays

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

James—5yrs

....and Shruti?????

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**





Dear Families,

We would like to pass on a HUGE thank you to all our families for the many, many ways you have supported the team during this COVID lockdown period.

Your support really puts smiles on our faces and confirms why we are in this industry—for our wonderful children and families!

We are all in this together and together we will get through this and resume to some sort of normal.

***Thank you again from everyone at Preschool!***



Let's Get Cooking with your  
Preschool.....

*Try this simple recipe.*

### **Banana Mini Muffins**

#### **Ingredients**

2 medium bananas mashed  
2/3 cup thick and creamy  
vanilla yoghurt  
1 cup self raising flour

#### **Method**

Preheat Oven 180d/160d fanforced, grease 24 hole mini muffin pan

Combine yoghurt and banana in a large bowl.  
Gradually stir in flour.

Spoon mixture into muffin holes and bake for 15min or until skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.  
Cool in pan for 2 minutes and then place on wire rack to cool completely

**ENJOY!**



**Looking for something to keep the children entertained during lockdown...take advantage of the nice weather and get outside!**

### **Why outdoor play is important**

Playing outside gives your child the chance to explore the natural environment and have adventures. They can play games, test physical limits, express themselves and build self-confidence. Outdoor play can also mean more mess – and more mess often means more fun!



When your child is outside, they probably have more space and freedom for big movements, like running, jumping, kicking and throwing. Physical activities like these are good for your child's health, fitness and physical development. Spending time outdoors might lower your child's chances of developing short-sightedness. And a bit of safe play in the sun can be good too – small amounts of sunlight exposure can help boost vitamin D levels.

### **Getting your child into outdoor play: ideas**

It's a good idea to encourage your child to play outside several times a day.

Outdoor play doesn't have to be a big deal, particularly if you have an outdoor space at your home. Especially with older children, sometimes all you need to do is send them out the door and let them come up with their own games. When younger children are playing outside, though, they need your help to stay safe around outdoor hazards.

Many younger children love to 'help'. This means that outdoor play can include working with your child on everyday tasks like weeding, sweeping the driveway, watering vegetables or hanging clothes on the line, getting the mail from the letterbox.

Making time to visit your local park, oval or playground is a low-cost and easy option, especially if you don't have a yard. Your child will probably have even more room to run around there and might meet other children.

If you can walk to the park, you can also teach your child about road and pedestrian safety on the way. Even younger children can get out of the stroller and walk for a little while. Walking together shows that you value and enjoy outdoor activity too. Other outdoor, active transport activities include riding bikes or scooters.

Preschoolers are learning to play with other children. They also like make-believe. You can help your child make the most of this stage with outdoor play ideas like:

- playing games of chasey, hide-and-seeK or kick-to-kick
- crawling through tunnels or climbing over fallen trees
- moving in different ways with colourful leaves, flowers, scarves or streamers
- making mud pies with dirt and old cooking utensils
- going on a nature walk together and naming all of the different sounds you hear
- building a cubbyhouse out of boxes, clothes baskets or outdoor play equipment or furniture.



# 8

## tips for staying in good mental and physical health during this challenging time

### **To stay connected to others, contact your colleagues, friends and family regularly.**

Regardless of your lifestyle, changes to your usual social and professional environment can induce a deep feeling of isolation. To stay connected to others, why not join a couple of groups on social networks? Consider organising regular video conferences with your or friends and family: talking face to face, even via a screen, helps maintain social ties.

### **To reduce stress, structure your days, take regular breaks and adapt your daily life to the current situation.**

If you're teleworking, it's advisable to keep to an "office" rhythm as far as possible: get up at your usual time, get ready and dress as if you're going to work (staying in your pyjamas can have a negative impact on both your morale and your work). Try to establish a realistic but structured schedule and stick to it throughout the week, especially if you have children.

### **To banish feelings of powerlessness, plan your day as precisely as possible.**

The aim is to set yourself objectives and allocate specific (and realistic) timeslots to each task. At the end of the day, go over what you've achieved and plan your objectives for the following day. Be gentle with yourself.

### **To stay productive and maintain a healthy balance, keep your private and professional lives separate.**

You may not have a home office, but anyone can create a dedicated work area at home, even if it's just the kitchen table. Define your space and remove everything from it that isn't related to work. Gather together what you need: chargers, headphones, notebook, pen, telephone, bottle of water and snacks if necessary. It's important to get into "work" or "home" mode and not mix the two.



### **Look after your mental and physical health with daily physical and relaxation exercises.**

During the lockdown, the number of fitness classes, yoga and meditation sessions and other similar options available online has gone through the roof: make the most of it! Build one or more exercise or relaxation sessions into your weekly schedule. Take your exercise out into the outdoors!

### **Choose your media sources carefully and purposefully.**

Too much information or information of low quality creates anxiety. Limit the time you spend glued to the news and choose your information sources carefully.

### **To keep your energy levels up and stay positive, spend some time on creative activities.**

Even if your days are busy, it's important to set aside some time for creative activities. Do some DIY, arts and crafts or knitting, take an online course.

### **Keep to regular mealtimes and opt for a light, balanced and varied diet to keep your energy levels up.**

If you've followed our tips up to this point, your days should already be well. We also encourage you to eat light meals, especially if, due to the lockdown, you can't take as much physical exercise as usual.



# Phonemic Awareness Programme



*Over the past two weeks our Schoolies have been focusing on the sound 'K' and have really enjoyed meeting our new friend Kicking King.*

Letterland's Kicking King is a keen football player. He loves kicking the ball really hard. That is why everybody calls him 'Kicking King'. The King likes to play with his kite as well, and gets all tangled up! In light of Kicking King's love of flying kites, this week the Schoolies learnt about the Chinese and Japanese tradition of kite flying. Jo came in and helped us make our very own Koi Fish Kites using collage items, coloured streamers, and a wooden paddle pop stick to hold onto while flying them around the garden. This craft-based activity gave the children a hands-on approach to their learning, and they were able to successfully engage with the focus sound 'K'.

A big thank you to the Guest family for donating an abundance of red kites which the children absolutely loved especially on the windier days where we all saw the kites go "whoosh" up into the air. In our second week of engaging with the sound 'K' we kicked into action with many rounds of soccer and various kicking games. The children kicked soccer balls, rugby balls, tennis balls practicing a key fundamental movement skill while engaging with the focus sound. Over the week the children also spent lots of time, carefully decorating and putting together a big 'Kicking King Crown'.



## Little Endeavours



We all had lots of fun during the holiday programme and are now back to our normal routine. Each time I come in, whether for work or just a visit, the children immediately ask me what we are doing today. I love their enthusiasm for Little Endeavours and the fact they have so much fun, not realizing that during these activities they are actually learning and practicing the skills that they will use when they start school.



**Italian Day Pizzas** - Cooking is probably the most popular activity that we do in LE. The children love working collaboratively together to make something they can then consume. They learn - to name a few areas - about following instructions, maths through measuring, working as a team, and hygiene when we wash our hands and do not cross contaminate our ingredients. Everyone chose what to put on their pizza and enjoyed their warm pizzas for lunch.



**Koi Kites** – As we made our Koi Kites the children shared information with me about the Kicking King and other words they knew that started with K which they recognized from the Phonemic Awareness Programme. Our kites flew well as the children ran around our outside grassed area negotiating their way around each other.



**Olympic Medal Tally Board** – The children and I shared what we knew about the Olympics as we made a display board to add the medals that Australia wins each day in Tokyo. Scissor skills were practiced as we cut around the circular medals, and coloured and traced the words. We then worked as a group to design and decorate the board.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## Gardening:

The children have continued with their interest in the garden and take the job of watering plants very seriously. We can all see that it pays off with the flowers and vegetables flourishing.



## Worm Farm:

When feeding the hungry worms Jo always has many eager hands to help. Some children are not too sure about getting close to the worms wriggling about but fascination gets the better of them and they soon get over their squirminess and enjoy feeding the worms fruit and vegetable scraps from morning and afternoon tea. As well as reducing waste, the worms provide us with good plant food to share. We are happy to share our precious fertiliser. Please let us know if you would like some for your garden, we will be happy to organise a bottle to send home.



# SUSTAINABILITY

**Return and Earn:** Sustainability has been the topic of conversation during group time. We talked about the importance of looking after our very precious planet and some ways we make a difference. We have revisited what can be recycled by understanding the different bins we use at preschool. The Scrunch Bin for plastics and packets which are easily scrunched and is taken to Coles on a regular basis to be recycled, the paper bin for all the scrap paper and cardboard left over from craft activities, the recycled craft bin for to us to use when creating interesting artwork. We also talked about our Return and Earn project and thank all the families for the bottles collected to be recycled earning money which will be donated to the Koala Hospital Fund. The children demonstrated a good understanding of the effect the bush fires have had on the bush and animals living in it. After talking about what bottles to collect and how to identify which can be recycled, the children were all challenged to find the 10c label identifying recyclable bottles and cans. A big bag of bottles were delivered this morning and with everyone helping, we lined the bottles in a row along the length of the room to be counted. The children discovered confidence in counting skills enabling us to count together up to 62 bottles. We talked about the value of 62 bottles and the children were all suitably impressed that the bottles would earn \$6.20 towards our ever-growing fund to support the animal hospital. A few children were not quite convinced that this is a good idea to share bottles that they could potentially use to buy things for themselves. After discussing the good we can do, empathy prevailed and we all look forward to continue our efforts to reach our Return and Earn goal of \$100 by the end of July. We have presently reached \$50, however with 360 bottles waiting to be delivered to Berowra Post Office as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted, we are pleased to say this will bring the tally to \$86.



## Return and Earn Project

Thank you for your continued donations of bottles and containers. The children are really enjoying being part of this project and look forward to counting and categorising the items as they arrive. The children are having fun whilst learning about one of the many practical solutions in reducing landfill which has such a devastating effect on our precious planet. Thank you to everyone for your contributions. Please keep those bottles coming, it is so much appreciated. Thank you to Michael, at the Berowra Post Office for his continued support in processing your collections. Together we can make a significant difference, no matter how small.

**We would appreciate your help in collecting drink containers with the 10c deposit label on the bottle/cans to add to our collection and together we will help make a difference in reducing waste. You will find a big blue container undercover outside in which to deposit your bottles. Once a fortnight this will be taken to a collection point and redeemed for cash.**



### Eligible drink containers

Under Return and Earn, most empty 150-millilitre to 3-litre drink containers are eligible for a 10-cent refund when presented to an approved NSW collection point.

Container materials that are eligible for a refund include PET, HDPE, glass, aluminium, steel, liquid paperboard.

Containers should be empty, uncrushed, unbroken and have the original label attached.

Wine, spirits, cordial and plain milk containers are not eligible.

Throughout the year we discuss the importance of recycling, you may soon find your children sharing this information with you at home!

***Together we can make a significant difference, no matter how small.***





**Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):** Every early childhood service is must ensure a Quality Improvement Plan is in place. The aim of the QIP is to help the serve self-assess their performance in delivery quality education and care, and to plan future improvements. The QIP also helps regulatory authorities with assessing quality of the service. A QIP must include an assessment of the programs and practices at the service against the National Quality Standard and National Regulations. Identify areas for improvement and include a statement about the service’s philosophy. A QIP should also document and celebrate the services strengths. Upon entry you will see displayed on our QIP board the progress we are making with current areas identified for improvement at the service. However, we would love to hear from you. There will be a “QIP Suggestion Box” out front and we encourage you to bring in your ideas for areas where you feel we need to improve and also we would love to hear from as to what your strengths are. As users of our service we really value your input.

## Dates to Remember!

July 26 – Aug 13th	Living Eggs
August 18th	Wednesday Schoolie’s Excursion to the Park (TBC)
August 23rd	Book Week
August 31st	Father’s Day Breakfast (TBC)



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