

# Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



*a caring place to learn and grow*



## *We are heading into February.....*

We are now back into the swing of things and time is already flying by. The children have done a great job in getting to know each other and our new children are settling in very well. Parents we encourage you to follow the children's example. If you see another parent you don't know please introduce yourself and start to build some connections with other parents. You never know they may turn out to be a life-long friend!

As we move further into the year, if your child wishes to spend time with another child outside of the Preschool environment, please feel free to drop an introductory note into the family's parent pocket. In line with our privacy policy we are unable to pass family contact details between you all.

## **Child Safety**

Parents just a reminder to please not let your child wander or run around in the car park unattended. **Please, please** hold your child's hand in the car park and know where they are at all times.

Please enter the Preschool driveway, driving slowly, and keeping a close eye out for our little pedestrians. And of course, please do not leave other children in the car during pick up and drop off times.



## **Immunisation—4 Year Old Booster**

If your child is due for their 4 year old immunisation booster please make sure that it administered by the due date. Immunisation is linked to child care benefit payments and entitlements will be cancelled if the immunisation is not administered in a timely fashion. It can be challenging having benefits re-instated. Please remember to provide the Preschool with an updated Immunisation Register Statement once immunisation is completed—thank you.

## February 2017

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## *Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review*

**Sweetpeas** A very warm welcome to all of our new Sweetpeas from the Sweetpea teachers, Deon and Adele. We are so excited to meet you all and we hope you have a wonderful year. So far this year, we have been spending some time getting to know each other. Everyone is settling in well and please be assured that if your child is a bit upset in the morning, this usually does pass quickly! Please feel free to have a chat with us if you are worried about your child's separation and you are welcome to call Preschool during the day. Over the coming weeks, we will start work on your child's developmental portfolio, starting off with some drawing work so we can observe how your child uses a pencil, which hand they prefer to use and to plan how to support this area of development. We are looking forward to an exciting 2017 at Preschool and please come and speak to us if you have any concerns.

**Bluebells:** Wow what a great start to the year the Bluebells have had. All our new Bluebells are settling in well to Preschool, our older friends at Preschool have been helping our new friends with the routine and transitions. The Bluebells have started to make some good friendships and have really enjoyed engaging in play, having conversations with their friends and teachers and having a good old boogie during music and dance. The first week's topic was 'Getting To Know You'. All our new friends said their names and told the class things they enjoy doing and talked about members of their family. They all did a great job and showed great confidence when standing out the front of the class. If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to ask your teacher and they will be happy to help.

**Schoolies:** A very warm welcome to all our new and returning families. It is great to see returning families and see how far your child has come since the Christmas break last year. It is also fantastic meeting our new children and their families. The Schoolies have settled in really well so far and bravely say bye to their family members each morning. During the day the Schoolies have engaged in a variety of open ended activities, such as: art and craft, blocks of different shapes and sizes and the magnets. The Schoolies have also enjoyed getting to know each other as they introduced themselves to their peers, stated their age and shared something personal about themselves, for example: their favourite activity or something they love. The Schoolies have also loved learning about 'Australia' and Chinese New Year. We have discussed numerous facts about Australia and identified various landmarks such as the Harbor Bridge, the Opera House and the Great Barrier Reef. We also highlighted the importance of Chinese New Year as it is fast approaching. Australia Day and Chinese New Year provided a wonderful opportunity to educate the children about other cultures so they grow up appreciating and understanding other people's identity aspects.



## Teacher Groups and Developmental Groups

Assigning children to teacher groups and developmental groups is one of the hardest jobs we do. We start out by date of birth but we have other considerations such as trying to make sure each Teacher only has 10 children per group per day, amongst other factors and as there is no set pattern with the children's bookings this job is really tricky. You will have noticed on your first day, that your child has been allocated to a teaching group. This teacher will be delivering the educational programme activities to your child, undertaking observations and recording your child's progress in their individual portfolio. They will be your first point of contact with any exchange of information or questions or concern regarding your child. Whilst saying this our teaching team works together closely and any of our teachers will be able to assist you should your teacher be away for any reason.

We then also assign the children to developmental groups. In essence, any child who is starting school the following year is considered a Schoolie. Children starting school 2 years out are Bluebells and our 3 year old friends are Sweetpeas. Every year we have different combinations of ages and as such the developmental groups do not always fit neatly in with the Teaching groups.

Please be assured that regardless of what teaching group your child is in they will be receiving the developmental activities in line with their developmental group. For example: if your child is a Bluebell and your teacher is Deon and your friend's child is also a Bluebell and their teacher is Stephanie they will still be doing the same "Bluebell" developmental work and will be individually supported and challenged as required.

We hope this is a clear explanation however, do not hesitate to talk to your child's teacher or Lara if you have any further questions.



Participation in **Show and Tell** is important for your child as it promotes the development of self confidence and expressive and receptive language skills. It also provides the opportunity for new learning as all the children contribute towards the ensuing discussion either by asking questions or telling their experience. Every child will be invited to participate in Show and Tell two times per term.

When it is your child's turn for Show and Tell they will be given the special Show and Tell bag. ***This means that their Show and Tell day will be the same day in the following week.***

Your child can bring any item that fits in the bag to talk about or they can do "talking" news and tell us about a recent adventure. Please do not worry about what your child chooses to bring or how many times they choose to bring the same item. What is important is their participation! If you have any questions please see your child's teacher.



## Enrolments

Dear families, a quick reminder to submit your waiting list form for any younger children you wish to attend Preschool in 2018 or even 2019. You are no doubt aware that we always have a healthy number of enrolments that usually sees all placements booked so it is wise to be on the waiting list as early as possible. If you have any friends in the same situation you may like to let them know!

## Open Day

We will be holding an Open Day at Preschool on **Thursday, March 30th from 10am to 12pm.**

The purpose of the Open Day is to invite new families to look around the Preschool and experience the educational environment we provide. It also provides the opportunity for new families to explore any questions they have about starting Preschool, gain understanding around our Philosophy and see how our educational programme is delivered as well as an opportunity to meet our lovely staff.

If you know anyone who is interested please invite them along.

Many thanks.



## February Birthdays'

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

Ella 4 yrs

Josie 4 yrs

Adam 4 yrs

Joss 4 yrs

Heleni 4 yrs

Finn 5 yrs



**Scholastic Book Club** Each term at Preschool, you will receive two leaflets from the Scholastic book club. This is a club where you can buy books for your family at a fairly discounted price. Not only are there fantastic books on offer, the Preschool receives 20% in vouchers for each order which then allows us to purchase new books and resources for Preschool. The first Book Club leaflet will be out soon with instructions attached to explain how you can place your orders. If you have any questions, please see Deon.



## Term 1 Educational Programme

You will have received the Term 1 Educational Programme and there is always one on display at the sign in table. We would like to take this opportunity to explain in a little more depth the different areas of the Programme.

### **Weekly Interest**

Each week we focus on a different interest at Preschool. The Preschool teachers take the time to explore with the children the weekly interest through information sharing at group times, games, puzzles, songs and stories. We make use of technology to further engage with the interest and answer some of the wonderful questions the children come up with. We love to hear from your family and your child in relation to the weekly interest. You will find at the diary table a sheet each week asking you to complete some questions with your child, in relation to the interest for the next week. This gives us a wonderful depth of information on the weekly interest and the opportunity for your child to talk to the rest of the group about the information provided on your sheet. Whenever you can, please pick up a sheet and bring it in the following week. We hope you enjoy filling it in with your child. Please see your teacher for more info. Of course if you happen to have some experience with the chosen interest and wish to share your knowledge or if you would just like to participate in the programme please chat with your child's teacher as we would love to see you.

### **Developmental Area**

This term we are focusing on a different area of development each week. Whilst all age groups will focus on the same area of development each child will work with their teacher at the level of appropriate challenge and support they require as an individual. On the next page the planned developmental activities for Term 1 are further explained.



## Term 1 Educational Programme

Week Commencing	Developmental Activity	Why it is important
30.1.2017	Fine Motor Skills specifically promotion of pencil grip.	It is important for the teachers to see how your child grips their pencil to enable the establishment of good pencil grip habits. Whilst holding the pencil correctly and learning to competently direct it is a fine motor skill, the teachers will also be ensuring children are sitting properly in their chairs, using good posture and observing their arm movement as good pencil grip skills require good strength in the large muscle groups as well as the muscles in the fingers. Promotion of the use of correct pencil grip for your child will continue throughout the year.
6.2.2017	Cognitive Skills specifically working with shapes	Learning about shape basics is important for children to know before they can learn the "other basics" of reading, writing, and math. Understanding shape is a tool for learning many skills in all curriculum areas, from math and science to language and reading. For example, when your child learns to discern the similarities and differences between colors and shapes, she is using the same skills she needs to recognize the differences between letters and numerals. We all use shape as a way of identifying and organizing visual information. Very early, your child begins to make a connection between familiar objects and their shapes. When your child explores different shapes, they are using one of the most basic educational processes: the observation of same and different. This concept provides them with a basic process that they will be able to use in observing, comparing and discussing all they see and encounter.
13.2.2017	Gross Motor Skills specifically catching balls	The ball catching activities planned for the children will firstly get the body moving and so much research confirms that active bodies not only build muscle and fitness but also support brain development. The activities planned will specifically practice hand-eye coordination and balance.
20.2.2017	Social Skills specifically verbal interactions	The teachers will be observing the children interacting with other children and with the teachers at meal times. It will be interesting for the teachers to note who loves to express themselves, who is a good listener, who uses physical communication, who is quiet and maybe still a bit shy. Confidence in social interactions with others is an important skill to learn in readiness for starting big school.
27.2.17	Creative Skills specifically via natural materials	When we consider essential skills that kids need to succeed on their academic pathway, we mainly think of basic attains: speaking, reading, writing, counting and so on. However, creativity is a way of thinking and expressing ourselves. It is about discovering and inventing new things, which motivates us to be imaginative and inventive. Encouraging children to try out new things and ideas is a crucial factor in their intellectual, physical and emotional growth. Everything kids experience and explore about themselves influences their further development. Children need to develop their own creativity skills as it will help them think "outside the box" in later years of education.
6.3.17	Language and Literacy Skills specifically story time.	The most crucial pre-literacy activity we can all do with our children is to read to them. They learn so much from books even at this young, pre-literate age. Our focus this week is on comprehension. We will be reading a story to the children and asking them to engage with the story by talking about it, answering questions or re-telling the story.
13.3.2017	Emotional Skills specifically exploring our identity	Our focus this week is to explore ourselves and better understand who we are. Our Early Years Learning Framework curriculum - Belonging, Being and Becoming is at the centre of activities this week. The children are encouraged to make some self discoveries and build their emotional confidence in who they are.

# Phonics Programme

Our Phonics Programme is delivered to the Schoolie Group each day using a variety of activities that centre on the sound of the week. These activities can be anything from stories, songs, puzzles, poems to art and craft. The primary purpose of the Phonics Programme is for the children to have **fun with sound** and which may flow onto letter recognition.

We use the Letterland Characters as the foundation of our programme and focus on a different Character over a two week period. The Schoolies can't wait to get started on the Phonics Programme and are very excited to travel to Letterland and meet all of the characters.

Over February and into March we will be meeting Sammy Snake, Annie Apple and Clever Cat. You can support your child's learning at home by referring to the information provided to you in the Phonics Programme at the end of this Newsletter.

Please feel free to speak with either Zoe or Steph if you have any questions relating to the programme.



## Settling your child into Preschool....

It is natural for there to be some apprehension for both parents and child when your child first attends Preschool. The child has new routines to learn, new people to meet and adjust to new Educators and a new environment. Parents are worried about how the child will cope. However, starting Preschool is an important step in providing the child with an introduction to school life and independence and it is important to get off to a positive start.

Children like regular and familiar routines. It can take some time for them to adjust to a new routine, rules or situation—such as starting Preschool. However, once settled the child's self esteem and confidence prosper.

### Strategies to Settle in Your Child

- ♥ Keep to a regular routine in the mornings—arriving at around the same time each day, preferably prior to 9.30am.
- ♥ Spend some time with your child—sit with them at an activity. Over time reduce the time you spend in the mornings.
- ♥ Tell your child that you are leaving with a kiss and a hug and assure them that you will be back to pick them up.
- ♥ Parting is often as difficult for the parent as it is for the child. If your child cries try to be excited for them and leave them with a staff member. Children often settle very quickly once the parent has left.

- ♥ You are free to ring the Preschool as often as you like during the day to see how your child is going.
- ♥ Let Educators know if your child is not themselves that day, so that if they become upset during the day Educators will be able to comfort your child appropriately.
- ♥ If someone different is picking up your child that day please let your child and Educators know.
- ♥ On starting your child it is suggested giving them short days and then lengthening the days over time.
- ♥ Please talk to the Educators if you have any concerns or if you need to pass on information concerning your child.

### The Educator's Role

On arrival your family will be greeted by one of our Educators. The Educator will enquire as to how the child is feeling and if the parents have any particular concerns or issues they need to discuss.

The Educator will assist the family to settle the child into the first activity of the day and place the child next to another child and take the time to introduce them to each other.

Should the child become distressed as the parent is leaving the Educator will put into action a strategy of acknowledging the child's feelings, assuring them that their parent will be back to collect them and then encouraging the child to do something special that the child enjoys.

Continued on next page .....

## Settling your Child into Preschool .. From previous page

So, some children skip off without a problem other children find it really difficult to say goodbye to mum or dad. Our advice is to be consistent with your morning routine. Generally speaking the hard part is —saying goodbye. By keeping a consistent morning routine on each visit your child will grow to understand this is what is going to happen each time and we find over coming weeks, will settle in much faster.

At Preschool we provide strong daily routines which provide comfort as children settle in. We have created a visual routine board to assist settling the new and returning children. It identifies each transitional period and Teachers spend time showing the children the pictures and discussing the routines and the board is located to easily allow the children to view it throughout the day.



Our lovely Jo will be coming in two times a week to deliver special activities this year. Jo will be organising activities for the children that will link with our developmental focus and weekly interest.



Jo's activities will get little hands and minds working as they further explore art, craft and cooking. Also, Jo will be extending our environmental programme and will involve the children in our Preschool vegetable patch and our worm farm! A notice will be at the sign-in desk each week to indicate what activities Jo has lined up for the week.

**Forms** have recently been sent home asking parents to complete and return to Preschool. One was a form called "All About Me" which went home to all families. Another form went home to returning families asking them to update information in relation to their child's development. Please return these **as soon as possible**, preferably by week commencing February 10th.

Don't Forget!

**Clothing Policy:** Please remember to ensure your child's shoulders are covered to protect them from the sun by dressing them in a t-shirt. Please do not dress your child in singlets or strappy tops/dresses. Please remember that thongs or crocs are not allowed at Preschool. Please dress your child in well fitted shoes or sandals. Our outdoor area is challenging and requires secure footwear to help avoid accidents.

THANK YOU





# GENERAL INFORMATION



## Opening and Closing Times

Due to licencing laws, we are unable to accept your child before **8.30am**.

We close our doors at **4.30pm** and the staff vacate the premises at this time. If you wish to have a chat to staff when collecting your child - **which we highly recommend** - please allow plenty of time to do so by arriving at Preschool by at least 4.15pm. Of course if commitments mean you are arriving just prior to 4.30pm staff will be very happy to chat with you about your child in the morning at drop off times. We do have a policy for charging families for collection of children after 4.30pm and this information is found in your parent hand book.

## Remember....

Please remember a **water bottle and hat** on every occasion your child attends Preschool. Thank you.



## We are peanut free

Please do not send food items that contain peanuts, walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios and pecans—or products that have these items appearing within the ingredient line. In particular, peanut butter and Nutella (or other nut based spreads) are not to be sent to Preschool.

## Signing In and Out

It is a legal requirement for you to sign your child 'in', upon arrival in the morning and 'out', when you collect your child in the afternoon. It is easy to forget as there is usually so much going on however, please try to keep this top of mind! Thank you.

## Quick Contact

Please find below a quick contact list to minimise your time when you have an enquiry or need to pass on information.

### Illness or Absence from Preschool:

Ph: 9476 4101 **prior to gam on the day** of absence to advise teaching staff.

### Checking on a Child who may have been unsettled or to pass information to teachers for a child attending that day:

Ph: 9476 4101 - at any time, talk to any of our teachers

### Account enquiries, CCB enquiries, Enrolment enquiries:

Annette: 9943 0731 at any time or via email at [annette@freelancer.net.au](mailto:annette@freelancer.net.au)

### Concerns or questions regarding the Programme or your child specifically:

Ph: 9476 4101 to speak with Lara or any of the teachers



# Phonics Awareness Term 1, 2017

Child Led Discovery and Intentional Teaching  
ELYP Learning Outcome 1,2,3,4,5 & Practice 2, 3, 4, 7, 8

Week Commencing	Letter - Sound	Sound	Letterland Character Introducing Sound	Letterland Character Story
30/01/2017	<b>S</b>	(s) as in snake	<b>Sammy Snake</b>	Sss..., Sammy Snake is having a lovely time by the Letterland swimming pool. Sammy loves sun-bathing, but he is always careful to put on sun-cream when he's in the sun. The sun is so bright today he may even have to put on his sunhat and sunglasses, so he doesn't have to squint.
6/02/2017				
13/02/2017	<b>A</b>	(a) as in apple	<b>Annie Apple</b>	Annie Apple lives in an apple orchard in Letterland. She has lots of animal friends and amazing visitors. Sometimes an acrobat swings by or an astronaut drops in! The only visitors Annie doesn't like are the ants when they tickle her.
20/02/2017				
27/03/2017	<b>C</b>	(k) as in cat	<b>Clever Cat</b>	Clever Cat loves to sit by the Letterland castle, having a cup of cocoa and doing her crossword puzzle. She is such a clever cat she can fill in all the words before she has finished her cake! If anyone in Letterland asks, "Who can help us with this problem?" the answer is usually: "Clever Cat can!"
6/03/2017				
13/03/2017	<b>B</b>	(b) as in bat	<b>Bouncy Ben</b>	Bouncy Ben is a very happy bunny rabbit, always having fun with his brothers in their blue boat. Bunnies love to bounce and Ben is the best bouncer in Letterland. He makes a special sound as he bounces about in words. Listen to the 'b...' sound at the start of his name and then you'll have his special sound.
20/03/2017				
27/03/2017	<b>D</b>	(d) as in dog	<b>Dippy Duck</b>	Dippy Duck lives by the Letterland duck pond. Everyone loves the duck pond. Dogs, deer and donkeys come to drink and dip their feet in the water. They also come to the duck pond to watch Dippy Duck diving down deep. Dippy Duck doesn't quack like other ducks. She's a Letterland duck so she makes a short little 'd...' sound instead!
3/04/2017				

## Holiday Programme

## Review of all sounds

**Note to Parents:** Each fortnight a new sound will be introduced to the children firstly by using a Letterland Character which introduces the children to their sound and letter shape through their own unique story. We will build sound and letter recognition further via the use of stories, songs, craft and games. Repetition is the best way for your child to become familiar with the focus sounds. To support the phonic awareness programme please talk to your child about the focus Letterland character, make up silly songs using the focus sound, play a game to find items you can see starting with the focus sound, sing songs, read books and nursery rhymes to your child- these are all great ways to have fun with phonics. **Please remember, the introduction to sound and creating awareness around sounds should be fun!** If your child happens to have an item that begins with the focus sound then they are very welcome to bring this for show and tell but this is not compulsory. Children should bring whatever they wish to show and tell as it is their time to share with their friends. If you have any questions at all about the phonics awareness programme please see Zoe or Steph.



## Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

As part of the accreditation process each childcare service is required to implement an ongoing Quality Improvement Plan. We will be reviewing our Quality Improvement Plan over the first few months of this year to set our goals against the National Standards for 2017. Please stay tuned for further information and updates. A copy of the current QIP is located at the sign in table and parents are invited to read this document at any time.



## Dates to Remember!

W.C. February 10th

“All About Me” and developmental forms  
due back to Preschool - *thank you*

Wednesday March 8th

Excursion to Post Office (Schoolies Only)

Thursday March 30th

Preschool Open Day (New Families to Preschool)



## Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten

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