

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 2018

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Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

Sweetpeas Welcome to all our beautiful new Sweetpeas! It has been great to meet everyone and we look forward to getting to know everyone over the coming year. Our focus for just now is settling in, meeting new friends and feeling happy in our new environment. We have enjoyed music time, stories, building with the construction and exploring our outdoor space. We look forward to the year ahead, watching you grow and develop.

Bluebells: What a fantastic first week the Bluebells have had at Preschool. They have done a wonderful job at settling in and adapting to the Preschool routine. The children have really enjoyed engaging in the resources preschool has to offer, especially working and collaborating as a team to build an amazing train track. It has also been so lovely to see the returning Bluebells lend a helping hand to all our new friends and ensuring everyone has someone to play with. Well done everyone!

Schoolies: Welcome to all our Schoolie families, it is wonderful to see you all as we return to Preschool. The Schoolies have had a fantastic first week of Preschool, everyone was very brave when saying goodbye in the mornings throughout their first week. The Schoolies engaged at the craft and collage table and showed off their creativity and artistic talent. The Schoolies also LOVED exploring our outdoor environment and had a great time going down our slippery slide. In the beginning of February we will begin our Phonics Programme where we introduce the children to characters from Letter Land and the wonderful sounds that they make. If you have any questions please ask Zoe or Steph.



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.



Please feel free to contribute to our Family Stories Book. All you need to do is record an activity, trip, family visit, excursion or anything your family has been up to. You can draw pictures, stick in photos or other items and create a story that all the children can look at. It is a great way for the children to share their home and family with all at Preschool. Any questions, please see your teacher.



Enrolments

Dear families, a quick reminder to submit your waiting list form for any younger children you wish to attend Preschool in 2019 or even 2020. 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 **Wednesday, March 21st 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.

Ethan—4 yrs

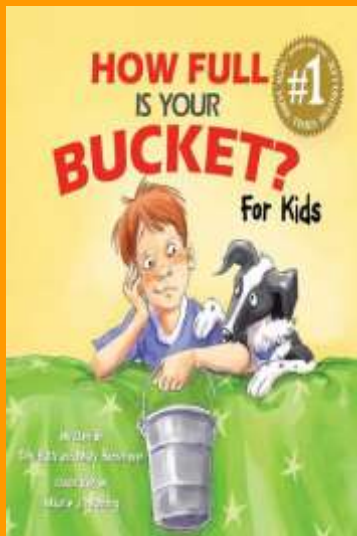
Adam—5yrs

Joss—5yrs

Heleni—5yrs



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.



How Full is Your Bucket?

During February we will be introducing a story 'How Full is your Bucket' to all our preschool children. Returning children will be familiar with this story. The Bucket is a metaphor that encourages the filling of another's bucket through kindness and helpfulness. Throughout the Preschool and spilling into other areas of the children's lives, we endeavour to create a welcoming and loving atmosphere for encompassing our children, family members and the community.

We will read stories that further the children's positive interactions and understanding of The Bucket, continuously talk about the concept during group time and have the children identify when someone has been kind or thoughtful filling another person's bucket—in the past everyone claps and applauds in support. In the past the children have responded really positively to this and constantly approach their teachers' and share their bucket filling experiences.

Children will often approach a teacher and says "Sarah filled my bucket" or "I filled her bucket because I said she could play". Alex hugs his teachers then announces "I filled your bucket". We will continue with "The Bucket" concept for the rest of the year. If you have any questions please ask a teacher or your child. And feel free to use The Bucket metaphor at home. Kindness and consideration of others is a wonderful gift to give our children.



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 this 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.

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 and then leave no matter what :)
- ♥ 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 an Educator. 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.

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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 and goals for your child. Please return these **as soon as possible**. Many thanks for your assistance.

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 regulations, 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 or any concerns in general:

Annette: 9943 0731 at any time or via email at 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





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 2018. 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!

February 9th

Please return all forms to Preschool

Thursday March 22nd

Preschool Open Day (New Families to Preschool)



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Cnr Amaroo Avenue and Pacific Highway

Mt Colah NSW 2079

Preschool: Ph: 9476 4101

Email: info@mtcolahpreschool.com.au

Annette: Ph: 9943 0731

Email: annette@freelancer.net.au