

# Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



a caring place to learn and grow



## Teaching problem solving to children

Problem-solving and critical thinking are among the most crucial skills a child can learn. They provide children with the foundations for decision making, logical reasoning, categorising, analytical thinking, negotiation, and creativity. Providing children with a caring environment that is rich in appropriately challenging activities is the key to developing problem-solving and higher-order processing skills.

**Name the problem:** If you can see a child struggling with an activity, give them the language to express what they are finding difficult. Once you have named the problem, follow up with a prompting question that encourages them to take the next step to solve the problem. For example, if a child spilled water and can't find a cloth to clean it up, you could say: "That looks like a big spill of water. What should we do next?"

**Answer with a question:** When a child asks a question, resist the urge to answer immediately. Instead, think about how you could use their query to encourage them to take the next step. For example, if a child asks: "Where are my shoes?" ask them: "What were you doing when you were wearing them last?" Prompting questions will encourage them to track back, problem-solve, and find the solution on their own. Use prompting questions such as: What do you think about that? What do you think comes next? Which part are you finding difficult? Is there another way you could try that? Where could we find the answer?

**Set the right level of challenge:** Develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills by providing children with activities that are challenging but not impossible. Activities should be a little out of reach and account for the child's stage of development, skill level, and interests. A task that is interesting and appropriately challenging will encourage persistence, which ultimately leads to problem-solving and critical thinking skills, as opposed to frustration and discouragement.

**Slow down and stand back:** Children are often more capable than we think. Sometimes, all it takes is to slow down, stand back, and observe. Take your cues from the child. Are they asking for help? Are they getting visibly upset? If not, allow them the time and space to persist. They will discover the learning outcome on their own.



## June 2021

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## Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

**Sweetpeas:** Over the past few weeks we have spent time learning about Road Safety, particularly in the carpark and while traveling in a car. The children were engaged and contributed much during our discussions about the importance of being alert in and around carparks, and holding an adult's hand. The stop, look, listen and think rule before crossing the road was reinforced with role play, songs and listening to the story 'Don't forget the cheese Pa'. This story is about children walking to the shops with their Nonna and Pa. We also reinforced the importance of buckling up in special car seats and using the safe door while getting in and out of the car. By learning how to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, the children discovered they have a good understanding how to be safe using safety equipment like helmets, seat belts and of course the very important holding hands rule. We all agreed that being outside walking or on bikes and scooters is a fun way to get fresh air while exercising. Happy cycling and Stay Safe everyone!



**Bluebells:** May has been and gone and we are now heading in to the cooler months of the year so please remember to pack a jumper/jacket for your child each day as outdoor play still happens at this time. The Sweetpeas and Bluebells engage in learning a new fundamental movement skill every two weeks, learning with an educator how to move (such as galloping), putting this into practice then using it in their every day movements and play. We call this time Mini Moves and it is a fun and encouraging way to learn and develop these very important skills and allows educators to see where the children need some support in gross movement skills. Developing fundamental movement skills early is important for the child's physical development and allows them to confidently participate in sports and physical movement activities. Every two weeks, your child will receive an award, letting you know what skills we have been learning and how they have progressed with learning this. You can also encourage this development at home – recently we have been developing our galloping skills and have had lots of fun pretending to be ponies! If you have any concerns about how your child's gross motor skills are developing, please feel free to come and speak to us.





## Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

**Schoolies:** *'Risky play is a natural part of children's play and is defined as a thrilling and exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury and play that provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits, exploring boundaries and learning about injury risk.'*

During a recent staff meeting, the educators engaged in a discussion and took the time to critically reflect on the term 'risky play' its importance to children's development and how we incorporate this into our preschool environment. Many educators shared their thoughts and identified various ways that we promote children to engage in this type of play both indoors and outdoors. Following this meeting we decided to further reflect upon this and noted the children's engagement in all things risky play. This month the Schoolies have shown such enthusiasm, bravery and persistence when it comes to our 'climbing tree' and obstacle courses here at Preschool. Educators have been ready, willing and able to encourage, challenge and support all the children to engage in and persevere in climbing experiences like these to promote gross motor skills and encourage autonomy throughout the day. Educators have also noticed this month at Preschool lots of thoughtfulness and words of encouragement when it comes to children of different abilities attempting to climb the tree or take on an obstacle course. Nothing brings us more joy than to see the children seek out and accept a new challenge, make a discovery, and celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others.





## 2022 Enrolments

During the month of June we will commence our enrolment process for the start of 2022 by asking our current families what days they would like their child to attend next year. We ask you to return your responses in a timely manner as we then move to our waiting list to fill the remainder of the placements. If you know of anyone who may be interested in attending Preschool next year, it would be wise to ask them to submit a Waiting List as soon as possible.



## July Holiday Programme

We are starting to put together our plans for another fantastic and educational Holiday Program in July. If you would like to participate, in any way or wish to contribute some suggestions please let us know.



## Scholastic Book Club

Thank you for all the orders for Issue 3, these have now been delivered to preschool. From the commission received earlier, we purchased the book Give Me Some Space which we used to participate in the National Simultaneous Storytime on May 19<sup>th</sup>. The children have been very interested in the bugs and insects in the garden and to encourage them to research further, we also bought a book called Backyard Bugs. Issue 4 will be in your communication pocket soon.

## June Birthdays

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

Harry 5 yrs

Cohen 5 yrs

Lily 4 yrs

Madelyn 5 yrs and Adele and Deon???





# Cool Weather Reminders



## Staying Healthy

As we head into the cooler months of the year and to potential cold and flu season we would like to remind families of ways they can support the Preschool environment to stay healthy.

If your child is presenting with any of the following symptoms you must keep them home and seek doctors advice if necessary:

- severe, persistent or prolonged coughing
- breathing difficulties (e.g. noisy, wheezy)
- yellowish skin or eyes
- irritated eyes, eye lining red, pus from eyes
- unusual spots or rashes
- vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- temperature over 37.5 degrees Celsius
- behaviour exhibited that is not 'normal' for the child (e.g. sleeping, being unable to participate in the daily activities as usual).

We ask that you do not bring any unwell child into the service and do not enter the service if you are unwell. If your child has been exposed to an infectious disease please contact the Preschool.

## Staying Active

We encourage you to keep active over the cooler months to support overall health and well being. At Preschool we will still be going outside to play and remind families to ensure that your child has warm clothes at Preschool so they can fully participate and enjoy our outdoor experiences at any time.





# Excursion to the Post Office

Monday, May 10th

*What a fantastic experience the Post Office Excursion turned out to be* with so many opportunities to extend developmental skills and knowledge. Schoolies first practiced their expressive language skills dictating a letter to a loved one—and most of them had a lot to say! The children then shared in discussions about how the mail system worked and once the group were reminded about road safety behaviours and holding hands it was time to walk to the Post Office to mail our letters. There was so much going on in our wonderful community and the children were able to identify nearly all of what they saw. Once at the Post Office the real treat came when the Postman arrived to clear the mail box and we were grateful when he took the time to talk to the children about his job and answer their questions. *Please take the time to read the full learning story which is on display at Preschool.*



Thank you to all  
our parent helpers  
who gave their  
time to make this  
excursion possible !





*On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May,* our preschool Mum's came together for dinner to celebrate Mother's Day. New covid rules that came in to place that day meant we had to guess who everyone was behind their mask but once the masks came off, the conversation flowed! The children had made their mums a placemat for the night and these were placed around the tables, sparking lovely conversations. It was great to see so many of our mums come together, make new friends, catch up with old ones and enjoy this time together.



# Feature Creature Visit

We were lucky enough to have Jackie and Kevin from Feature Creatures visit us with their wonderful reptile show. The children were able to participate in this rich and meaningful enquiry-based experiences through shared discussions and hands on interactions with a range of species including stick insects, turtles, frogs, spiders, lizards, crocodiles and snakes!!!

We observed enthusiastic, curious, confident, and involved learners throughout this experience. They used their existing knowledge and transferred this to contribute to group discussions. Children and educators alike faced some of their fears with support from one another. What brave participants and what a fun, educational experience for everyone involved!





# Phonemic Awareness Programme

The children have really been looking forward to meeting new friends from Letterland and have shown amazing engagement with the focus sound each week making some fantastic links between the sound and the environment and their prior knowledge—good work Schoolies!



Halfway up a **h**igh **h**ill in Letterland is **H**arry Hat Man's **H**ouse. In his **h**ouse, he has a **h**at shop where he makes hundreds of **h**ats. We decided to further explore **h**ouses by reading the book 'Wonderful **H**ouses around the world'. The children looked at photos of many unique **h**ouses shown in the book, all in which were built out of natural materials. During free play Steph set up a play space with blocks, natural materials, people figurines and loose parts for the children to get creative and build a **h**ouse they may have seen in the book. The children loved this experience they built various **h**ouses from India, Mongolia, China, Spain, they referred to the book looking at the pictures of the features in the **h**ouses and what materials they needed to use to construct the **h**ouse.



Next, we meet **M**unching **M**ike who loves to **m**unch on **m**etal. This gave us the idea to explore **m**agnets. The children watch a short clip on what **m**agnets are and how they work. An experience was set up for the children where they could investigate how **m**agnets work freely. They held two **m**agnets close and felt them either attract or repel. They then walked around the preschool environment exploring what the **m**agnets would connect to. We then had some more fun and made our very own fridge **m**agnets to take home.



# Little Endeavours



We focused on our Mum's for the first half of last month and the children loved talking about their Mums and Grandmothers and creating special gifts for them.



**Mother's Day Present** – The preschoolers loved the fact they were making a present for their Mum and it was great to spend individual time with each child as we put the heat packs together. Measuring the rice, adding the essential oil and then watching as I sewed the end of the heat packs up gave lots of chances for talk as the children were very curious about the process and sewing machine and lots of questions were asked. According to my chats not many Mums have sewing machines but some of the Grandmothers do!



**Mother's Day Certificate** – The children all love their Mums for many reasons as I found out and showed great fine motor skills as they stuck the beans, buttons and pasta on the heart outline of their certificate telling their Mum why they loved them.



# Little Endeavours



The second half of the past month we used recycled items to make individual artworks and then our big group project—the Big Red Robot.



Lots of creativity was shown in all the activities.

**Recycled Lid Art** – I have a crate of lids and the children enjoyed rummaging through it to find the right lids for their creative artwork. The first day we made people out of recycled DVD and CD cases using old wooden pegs as well, and on the second day the children made pictures based around the lids they stuck down.



**Big Red Robot** – This is our first big group project and for two weeks the children were on a high as we put our robot together, painted him red and then decorated him. There was great excitement as the children were able to add the recycled red items they had brought in from home and each child knew where they wanted to place their red item. We also added recycled red items from the preschool storeroom. He really is spectacular and a great conversation starter for the sound R which the children have been focusing on in the Phonemic Awareness Programme.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Veggie Garden.

Here at Mount Colah Preschool, we strive to embed sustainability into our daily routine and practices. Showing 'Respect for our environment' is a key facet of our Preschool's Philosophy, linking closely to the (EYLF) learning outcome 2.4 'Children becoming socially responsible and learn to show respect for the environment.'

This month at Preschool we have seized many opportunities to reuse, re purpose and create works of art using cardboard boxes and loose parts like bottle lids. The children love nothing more than making use of all the many donated recycled items from families and deliveries that come in big boxes. From drawing on boxes, creating objects small and big the children always find ways to express themselves through art and recycled materials. Jo's little Endeavours have spent the last few weeks creating the famous 'Red Robot' as part of our Phonics' Programme and exploration of the sound 'R', this robot is made entirely out of recycled materials and many additions have been made from children bringing in from home a red recycled item. We have all loved watching this project come to fruition, advocating for sustainability with the help and contributions of children and families.

This month during outdoor play many of the children have been playing down on the bark near the veggie's patches. Many of them have commented on how great our veggies are looking and how tall they have grown since we last checked. Educators saw how eager the children were to pick some of the lettuce, so we spent one week this month picking bit of lettuce out of the garden to enjoy for afternoon tea. A lot of the children ended up trying some, many enjoying it and some not so much. Nonetheless the children love spending time in the garden especially digging, planting and taking care of the veggie patches. Giving children the opportunity to explore something like a home-grown veggie garden allows children to discover new connections to the natural world, which also helps foster the children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.



## 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):

A quick update on the projects currently in our QIP. Our NQS weekly reflection programme whereby educators reflect on differing areas under the NQS is going well. Some families have kindly offered to contribute to this process so if you would like to participate please let us know. We are also putting together an Employee WHS Handbook. Currently we are still gathering together all the information that needs to be included in this handbook and this is well underway. Our programme to extend educator knowledge of health and well being to support themselves, children and family is well underway, with educators participating in the Be You training modules.



## Dates to Remember!

June 7	Public Holiday—Preschool closed
June 28– July 8th	Holiday Programme



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