



Self-help and Independence Skills

We've all experienced the morning rush trying to get out the door to where we need to be, only to be faced with your preschooler refusing your help to put their shoes on as they want to do it themselves. As frustrating as this can be, this is a good indicator of your child's developing self-help skills.

What are self-help skills?

Self-help skills are the everyday tasks children learn, so they are ready to participate in life activities, such as dressing themselves, eating independently, brushing teeth etc.

Why are self-help skills important?

Encouraging children to try something for themselves rather than doing it for them straight away, supports them to build self-esteem, confidence and trust in themselves. Self-help skills also act as the foundations for many school related tasks as well as life skills.

Self-help skills fall into four main categories:

- Self-feeding.
- Self-dressing and grooming.
- Hygiene and toileting.
- Helping with chores.

Children will develop these self-help skills gradually with repetition, practice and encouragement.

How we can help children develop self-help skills.

To support our children with their developing self-help skills, give them opportunities to practice. When children come out of the preschool sandpit, they are encouraged to try putting on their own socks and shoes, although educators are ready to help if needed. At preschool, the children are responsible for tidying up after play and putting toys away, tidying up the garden etc. You can encourage self-help at home from a young age. Ask your preschooler to make their bed in the morning and even if the quilt is crooked or not quite to the top, acknowledge and thank them. Let your child choose their own clothes for preschool and encourage them to try dressing themselves. Include your child in setting the table for dinner. All of these may take a bit of extra time but the skills your child will learn will last them a lifetime.

If you are concerned about your child's self-help skills, please come and have a chat with your educator who can give you tips and strategies to further encourage this.



June in Review 2023

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Our Preschool Programme in Review

Sweetpeas: We are fast approaching the end of the semester and have been working on social goals. It has been wonderful to witness the children starting to develop friendships, learning how to make friends, share and co-operate with each other. The Sweetpeas are beginning to move away from parallel play, where friends play side-by-side, to social play, where friends begin to interact and share ideas with one another. We have been talking about emotions, what they look and feel like, through facial and body expression. We have all enjoyed games, making faces in the mirror and choosing emotion cards to identify how we were feeling as well as singing 'If you're Happy and you Know it' with lots of actions. Naming feelings is the first step in helping children learn to identify them, so they can talk about their feelings and identify feelings in others. Understanding emotions in themselves and others helps children regulate their own responses. It is important to understand that everyone feels mad, sad, or scared sometimes and that all feelings are OK, but not all responses are OK e.g. It is OK to feel frustrated, however, it is not OK to push or grab toys. Developing these skills are important in order to understand ourselves and interact appropriately with those we meet in our journey through life.

Bluebells: Can you believe we are already half way through the year! We are having a wonderful time with our Bluebells and we love to see the learning and discovery that is taking place every day. Friendships are developing and the children enjoy sharing their play with each other, both indoors and outdoors. Over the past few weeks, we have been developing our cognitive skills and participating in activities that support our focus and concentration skills. This group enjoy puzzles and these are great for developing memory skills, as well as developing the ability to plan, test ideas and solve problems. While completing a puzzle, children need to remember shapes, colours, positions and strategies to complete them. Children also begin to notice similarities and differences as they look at the pictures more carefully, to find where the pieces need to go. Puzzles are also great for developing essential fine motor skills. Picking up, moving and twisting the pieces of a puzzle helps children to develop finger strength and hand-eye coordination. As the child picks up and positions pieces, they also develop small-muscle control in their fingers. Follow your child's lead to discover what puzzles they are interested in and don't be afraid to extend their learning at home. You may have a 100 piece puzzle you can work on as a family – what a great learning opportunity!

Schoolies: As we approach Term 3, big school is definitely on our minds and in preparation for big school, we are continuously supporting the Schoolies with their self-help skills and independence. We are aware the ratio of children to educators will decrease next year and as a result, like to ensure that our Schoolies will be well-equipped for the self-help challenges they will face in the future. This includes packing and unpacking their own bags, persisting with opening food packaging, looking after their belongings and packing away resources, independent toileting and dressing, efficient hand hygiene and putting on shoes independently. This is something that all educators encourage throughout the day on a regular basis, however it became a strong focus during our emotional developmental week. We discovered that with encouragement and positive self-talk, the children were more likely to persist with challenging tasks such as putting their shoes and socks on after playing in the sandpit. Not only does this build the children's confidence but also their independence and readiness for school. We are so impressed with the children's morning rituals as they positively separate from their loved one, find their name tag followed by a locker, unpack their morning tea and lunch boxes in the assigned baskets and become engaged in an activity. Well done Schoolies! We will continue to encourage these self-help skills in your final semester at Preschool.



Our Community Week 5th June



We are so lucky to live in a wonderful community. During this week we looked closer at our community. This included sharing photos of ourselves out in our local community including shops, sports, restaurants. We used these photos as a point of discussion and created a Community Board with all the photos that have been shared. We also used the opportunity to go to the Community Garden and have a look at what we could see. In our group times we also used digital technology in the form of Google Maps on our Edutouch screen to access information. Travelling through our community looking at the local shops including the post office, Jim and Harry's, the barber, train station and some of our houses.



Schoolies Excursion to the Post Office Tuesday 6th June

Our Tuesday Schoolies went on a little excursion to our local post office to post a letter to a loved one which they wrote at preschool earlier. Once there we purchased some stamps, placed them on our envelopes and put our letters in the post box. We were also able to look around the post office. It was a great opportunity to get out in our local community and learn more about the postal system. Transferring our existing knowledge from one context to another.



This excursion was made possible from the help of our wonderful parent volunteers Kirsten, Cheryl, Kirsty, Gareth, Rawi, Alicia and Ben. Thank you 💙

Road Safety Week 13th June



Following the children's interests towards cars and roads as well as some of our parents' suggestions, we focused on the topic Road Safety for our Discovery group time. This included exploring how to safely cross the road, especially when entering and exiting Preschool. The children practised stop, look, listen and think prior to crossing the road and were introduced to our orange road safety mat which they wait on until it's time to leave, followed by holding an adult's hand before they exit the Preschool gate. We also explored road signs, being safe in and around cars and bike safety. We were so proud of the children as they transferred their knowledge into their play and real life experiences. We ask that families please continue to support these safe practises, ensuring you are holding your child's hand when entering and exiting Preschool and crossing roads.



Emergency Vehicles Week 19th June



During our recent discovery interest of road safety, the children expressed interest in the emergency vehicles that also travel our roads. We decided to explore this further and investigated emergency vehicles and services. The children initially discussed what kind of emergency vehicles we already knew about such as police cars, fire trucks and ambulances. However, when we read a book called Emergency Services, we discovered that some of these services also have flying vehicles! We used technology through the use of the iPad to further discover the Westpac helicopter, air ambulance, police helicopters and one that the children were particularly interested in – The Royal Flying Doctor Service. We discovered that this service is so important for people with no hospitals or doctors nearby, especially people who live on farms or stations in remote areas of Australia. We also discovered the fire service helicopter which has a large hose that can be dipped into dams to fight bushfires. You can see some of our drawings of these vehicles in the floorbook.



Police Visit

Friday 23rd June



Whilst learning about Emergency Vehicles we were lucky to have Officer Katie and Officer Mark visit us at Preschool. It was a great learning opportunity in which the children were taught all about the role of a police officer, the equipment they use and how they help to keep us safe. The children were given the opportunity to try on a variety of police uniforms and also learn a bit more about road safety. **Katie taught us the importance of also learning our addresses so we strongly encourage families to talk about this with your children in the event of an emergency.** The most exciting part was getting the opportunity to take a closer look at the police vehicle. We were able to sit in the front seat and even press the siren button, learning how this changes when the horn is pressed. A big thank you to Officer Katie and Officer Mark for their time for providing us with learning that allowed us to develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities (L.O2)



Little Endeavours with Jo

What a busy month it has been at preschool and in LE – our red robot and lavender lemonade were great group projects focused on the Letterland sound the Schoolies were doing, and recycled vehicles and our fireman display focused on community and community vehicles. The children are very social now during our LE time and showing how their ability to converse with others has developed and that they are able to take turns when listening and talking.



Red Robot – Our red robot was a two week group activity and in the end we transformed boxes into our robot that stands in the preschool hall watching over us all. Through the making of him the preschoolers demonstrated they can collaborate together, experiment, problem solve, create and wait their turn - showing they are confident and involved learners. L.O. 4.1



Lavender Lemonade – Thanks to preschool families and the Mt Colah community we had plenty of lemons and lavender to make our lemonade. The children were all involved in the process – enquiring when they had questions to ask about the steps in making the lemonade and the electric juicer that we used. The preschoolers helped each other with the juicer – showing their friends how to do it and holding the base for them. We all agreed it was 'spicy'.

Little Endeavours with Jo

Recycled Vehicles – Using a huge variety of recycled items the preschoolers used their imaginations to create fantastic vehicles – most of which we will never see on our roads in Mt Colah. They problem solved when items didn't work/stick where they wanted them and all showed great pride in their finished vehicles – no two the same.



Fire Fighters – As well as fire fighters we also made a huge strip fire and a fire truck for our display board. The Mt Colah Preschool fire fighters all look very happy and as everyone coloured their own outfit there were some new designs created. The preschoolers love looking at the board and finding themselves and their friends.





Phonemic Awareness Programme



During the month of June, the Schoolies have been learning about the focus sounds /r/ and /l/. The children have been engaged in a variety of songs, stories, activities and craft experiences with the Letterland characters Red Robot and Lucy Lamp Light.



This week the children explored the /r/ sound with Red Robot. This included making a rhubarb and raspberry stew to be served with yoghurt for afternoon tea. We also constructed the enormous Red Robot itself, using recycled materials from home. The /r/ sound is a tricky one and is not expected until the age of 6, however the children enjoyed stories and songs which allowed them to connect the /r/ sound with the letter r and words that start with the sound, further developing their understanding of the relationships between sounds and letters.



As we learnt about the /l/ sound, we focused on the topic light. This included engaging with our light board, torches and lamps. For a special afternoon treat, the children made lovely lavender lemonade with Jo. Thank you to the families who provided the lavender from their plants. Lastly, the children wrote letters to their loved ones, to then post at the local Post Office, allowing the children to explore our community.



SUSTAINABILITY

This month the children have enjoyed spending their time down in the garden, watering and watching our vegetables grow, while remaining keen to harvest them. There was so much excitement when the children were giving the garden some TLC and pulling weeds from the garden beds, for them to then discover our first purple carrots shooting from the soil. The children then picked each carrot and some lettuce for us to enjoy for afternoon tea. The children have expressed wonder and interest in the outdoor learning environment and have shown an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition thanks to the engagement with our gardens.



Return and Earn Donations for Diabetes Australia

This month we have successfully filled up a large bag of cans and bottles for our Return and Earn Program.

We ask that families continue to make donations to our Return and Earn bin at the front of Preschool.

Self Assessment (QIP)—CPR Training

It is important that the educators always keep up with the latest training, especially when it comes to the health and safety of our preschool community.

The educators refreshed their CPR training this month, practicing a variety of scenarios that would require CPR or the use of an AED (Defibrillator). Whilst we hope this is a skill we never have to use, it is important to have knowledge and confidence to undertake this as a first aider.



July Birthdays

A big Happy Birthday to all of our children having a birthday this month!



Ellie—4 years
Sophia—4 years
Ava S—5 years



Community Connections

MOUNT KURING-GAI PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN 2024



KINDY KICK START DATES:

Wednesday 1st November Monday 6th November
Tuesday 14th November Thursday 23rd November

Time: 9:45 - 11:15

SCHOOL TOUR DATES:

Tuesday 25th July 2:45	Friday 28th July 9:45	Tuesday 8th August 2:45
Friday 11th August 9:45	Tuesday 15th August 2:45	Friday 18th August 9:45

If you would like to enrol your child for Kindergarten 2024 or book a tour at Mount Kuring-gai Public School please contact the school office for more information.

Phone: (02) 9457 9088

E-mail: mtkuringga-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Dates to add to your diary!

Is your child attending Mt Kuring-gai or Mt Colah Public in 2024??

Kindergarten 2024 Parent Expo

Tuesday 8 August
6:00pm – 7:00pm
In the School Library

- ❖ Combined School Choir Performance
- ❖ Representatives will discuss:
 - Key Learning Areas
 - Learning Support - MiniLit/MacLit
 - Parent & Citizen (P&C) Programs
 - Before and After School Care (BASC)

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**Enrol now for
Kindergarten
2024!**



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