

# Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



*a caring place to learn and grow*



**We** hope you have all enjoyed your start to the Preschool year and are starting to settle into our daily routines. The children are enjoying meeting new friends and continue to astound us with their curiosity and enthusiasm to learn. If you have any questions at all please see your child's educator. We

encourage you to read our Newsletter each month as it contains articles on child development, information on the many learning activities the children have been involved in and upcoming events.

## **Important Note Regarding Child Care Subsidy**

If you received Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for the 2018-19 financial year, you must confirm your income. Most parents have already done this. If you haven't, do it now.

If you don't confirm your income by 31 March 2021, your CCS will reduce to 0%. This means you'll need to pay full fees when you access child care. The deadline for confirming your income was extended from 30 June 2020 to 31 March 2021 because of COVID-19.

If you confirm your income after 31 March 2021 Centrelink can start your CCS again. But if there's a gap between your CCS stopping and starting again, you'll miss out on CCS for that time.

Centrelink sent letters to families in February 2021 asking them to confirm their income.

To confirm your income you need to either lodge your tax return with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or tell Centrelink you don't need to lodge one and confirm your income online.

For more information about Child Care Subsidy go to:

[servicesaustralia.gov.au/ccstimelimits](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/ccstimelimits)



## **March 2021**

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## Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

**Sweetpeas:** Welcome to all our new Sweetpeas. It has been great meeting everyone and we look forward to getting to know each other over the coming year. Our focus for now is settling in, meeting new people and feeling happy in our new environment. The children will be learning to cope with many new experiences, one of them being away from parents, which may take time. They are learning how to make friends and navigate their way through the routines of the day which can be a challenge, but with help from educators and older children everyone is doing well. Engaging in activities such as play dough, construction and dramatic play help children to settle in and enjoy their day. Not only is play dough fun to touch and squeeze, little fingers are also strengthening to develop important fine motor skills used for writing and cutting. During developmental time we have enjoyed small group activities, reading favourite stories like 'The Very Cranky Bear' series and playing circle games getting to know each other's, names, favourite colours and food.

*To get the most from Preschool, I need an encouraging adult to help me do it my way, I learn through all these activities because I want to and it's fun!*

**Bluebells:** It has been lovely to see how well everyone has settled in to the new preschool year and a very warm welcome to our new families. Over the last few weeks, we have been spending time getting to know each other. The Bluebells are enjoying playing together and already we can see beautiful friendships developing. Our developmental programme has started and so far we have been spending time as a group and also individually working on our fine motor skills. The children have also been spending some time exploring our outdoor environment and engaging in imaginative play and exercising their gross motor skills. It has been a great start to the year and I look forward to continuing to get to know everyone and extending our relationships further over the next few months.

**Schoolies:** This month the Schoolies have been adopting the 'Fill your bucket' concept with such success. The Fill your bucket concept was explained to the children as every body has an imaginary bucket on their head and filling somebody's bucket means that you do or say something to that person that makes his or her day better. Educators have noticed over the past month that many of the children, especially the Schoolies have displayed a good understanding of this concept and are demonstrating simple words and acts of kindness during play and in conversation with both children and educators. We will continue to promote and encourage this concept throughout the year focusing on positive interactions within our preschool environment, encouraging children to learn to interact in relation to others in care, empathy, and respect (L.O 1.4).



## Open Day

Wednesday, March 31st 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 ask 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 wonderful educators. If you know anyone who may be interested please let them know.



## Enrolments

We currently have 1 place left this year, if you know anyone who may be interested please let them know. Also a quick reminder to submit your waiting list form for any younger children you wish to attend Preschool in 2022 or even 2023. You are no doubt aware that we always have a healthy number of enrolments that usually sees all placements booked at the beginning of each year, 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!



## We are on Facebook!

Please 'like and follow' our page where we will bring you Preschool community updates, helpful articles regarding early childhood development and some of the fun activities and learning experiences we enjoy during our busy days at Preschool.







## Speech Screening Programme

Wednesday, March 24th

Each year the Preschool provides an opportunity for your child to undergo a speech screening assessment. This is a short assessment carried out by Johanna Diment a local Speech Therapist. The assessment will indicate whether your child's speech development is on track or whether a comprehensive diagnostic assessment may be recommended. Information about the speech screening programme will be coming home to you shortly. Should you wish for your child to participate please speak with your child's educator.

## HARMONY WEEK



Dear Parents,

In March, we will be celebrating Harmony Week at preschool. We have many cultures that make up our preschool family

and to celebrate this, we would like to put together a cookbook full of family recipes to share with each other. This could be one that has been handed down through your family or just one that your family really enjoys.

If you would like to submit a recipe please email this to us (with a photo if you have one and a bit of background of where the recipe comes from) at:

[info@mtcolahpreschool.com.au](mailto:info@mtcolahpreschool.com.au)

## March Birthdays

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

Magnus—3 yrs

Rojjan—5 yrs

Matthew—3yrs

Educator Jo and

Maddie ????





### Late Collection of Child Policy

Our service reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when families have not collected their child/ren from the service before closing time. If a child is collected from Preschool after 4.30pm a late collection fee will apply. The fee is \$15 for collection up to and including the first 10 minutes then \$5 per minute thereafter.

### Slip, Slop, Slap



Please remember to apply sunscreen to your child on arrival and if you don't have time please let our educators know and they will happily apply for you. Please remember. As per our sun safe policy remember your child's hat every day and clothing that covers their shoulders. Let's stay sun safe!

### Illness Policy

To minimise the risk of infection our Illness Policy states should a child have an episode of vomiting or diarrhoea at Preschool they are to be collected within 15—20 minutes if possible and no longer than 1 hour of the episode and are not able to return to Preschool until 24-48 hours has passed since the last episode. If parents are not contactable at the time then emergency contacts will be required to collect your child. The same requirement is stated should a child demonstrate a high temperature (38 deg +)



### **Safety Reminder**

Dear parents and carers a quick reminder that you are responsible for the supervision of older and younger siblings who accompany you at pick up and drop off times. Siblings should remain in your company at all times. Please ensure siblings are not running around or playing on the equipment and that they follow any rules we would ask of the Preschoolers'. This ensures that we continue to provide a safe environment for our Preschool children.



## Scholastic Book Club

Thank you for the orders received, these will be delivered to preschool within the next week. Every order gives the preschool 20% commission to spend on books and resources in Scholastic and this month we have chosen a box of counting blocks and a book all about Australia. Issue 2 will be in your parent pocket in the next week or two.



## Why is Phonemic Awareness Important?

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the sounds of language. Developing strong competencies in phonological awareness is important for all children, as the awareness of the sounds in words and syllables is critical to hearing and segmenting the words students want to spell, and blending together the sounds in words that students read. It is important because sound phonemic awareness is the primary predictor of success in early reading and spelling skills in kindergarten through 2nd grade.

Our Phonemic Awareness Programme is delivered to the Schoolie Group each day using a variety of activities that focus 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. We focus **on the simple beginning sound** of the character's name e.g. Sammy Snake. 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 and their special sound.



We have already met Sammy Snake and Annie Apple and will soon introduce the children to 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 Stephanie if you have any questions relating to the programme.





# Healthy Habits



The Preschool participates in ***Munch and Move*** which is a NSW Health initiative that supports the healthy development of children, birth to 5 years, by promoting important health issues such as physical activity, healthy eating and reduced small screen time.

**Fundamental Movement Skills:** The Sweetpeas and Bluebells have Fundamental Movement Skills time each day to promote the development of specific gross motor skills, muscle strength, balance and co-ordination. This term we will have fun focussing on the gross motor skills required to jump, run, kick and hop.



**Munch and Move Sharing Bag:** Each week our sharing bag will go home to a different family. The bag encourages children and families to be active. As a family we ask that you read the story provided and fill out the physical activity journal with photos and information on what your family did that promoted physical movement. It is a great opportunity for your child to then share this with the preschool group.



## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL



The emotional and social world of your Preschooler is growing at a very fast rate. Now they have started Preschool they have new educators to meet, new children to meet and they need time to find their place in the new environment.

Developing confidence in their ability to interact positively with others develops and maintains friendships. Children also need to learn how to manage feelings and emotions this enables your child to build autonomy and independence.

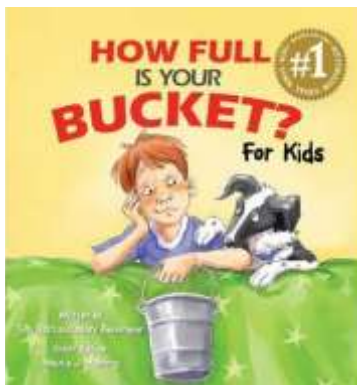
The way we interpret and respond to our feelings has a major impact on our behaviour, choices, and how well we cope with and enjoy life. Think about all the different feelings you have every day – from surprise to shame, elation to empathy – and how you react to each emotion. The way you deal with your feelings now is very different to how you would have at age 14, which is different again to your responses age four.

Emotional development is a complex process that begins in infancy and continues into adulthood. Emotional development starts with young children:

- learning what feelings and emotions are
- understanding how and why they happen
- recognising their own feelings and those of others
- developing effective ways of managing them.

As children grow and are exposed to different situations, their emotional lives also become more complex. Developing skills for managing a wide range of emotions is really important for their emotional wellbeing.

The educators have introduced a story called **“How Full is Your Bucket”**. It is about how we all have an imaginary bucket of feelings and we can choose to fill up our friends buckets by being kind. If we hurt our friends feelings then we might be emptying their bucket. This story asks the children to consider are they being kind, helpful, inclusive and caring to their friends?



The children are eager participants in these discussions as they start to explore their own feelings, how to manage them and begin to understand the emotion of empathy and consider how their friends maybe feeling in different circumstances. It would be great if you would like to continue these discussions at home.





# Preschool RULES! 2021

This month the Educators collaborated with the children to construct simple rules for our Preschool for 2021. We discussed how these rules help everyone feel safe and secure within our environment. Encouraging the children's participation in the process of developing the rules supports the development of their autonomy and independence, their self regulation and helps to create a caring and empathetic environment.

Our rules are displayed at our group time area and on our notice board. Regular discussions are had around these as we promote a safe and positive Preschool environment.

- We listen to the speaker
- We keep our hands to ourselves
- We are Bucket Fillers - we fill each other's buckets with kindness
- We take care of Preschool belongings
- We use our manners
- We walk inside and on the pavers



## To Infinity and Beyond! ..... or maybe to the moon?

We were talking about space last week and how people have been to the moon. Deon had said that the first men on the moon were Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. James L puts his hand up and says *"Excuse me Deon, I think you mean Buzz Lightyear"*.



# Phonemic Awareness Programme

*Our Phonemic Awareness Programme is based on the Letterland Programme. Each fortnight we meet a new resident of Letterland who introduces us to a new letter sound. We then have a lot of fun engaging with and practicing making that sound through stories, singing and hands on activities. In recent weeks the children have had the chance to meet.....*



## Sammy Snake

The children loved meeting **S**ammy Snake, our first Letterland friend who loves **s**wimming in the pool and **s**unbaking. The children discovered so many words that start with **s**ammy **s**nakes **s**ound, **s**leep, **s**ad, **s**andwich, **s**tep, **s**tar, **s**aturn and many more. The children tested their fine motor Skills as they painted and cut out their own **s**un. The children then engaged in an open conversation around the **s**un sharing fun facts with their friends.



## Annie Apple.

**A**nnie **A**pple lives in an **a**pple orchard in Letterland with all her **a**nimal friends, so we decided that we would make our own **A**nnie **A**pple tree at preschool. The children had the opportunity to discover the life cycle of an **a**pple through connecting with a variety of texts, 'Mr. Browns Magnificent **A**pple Tree' was their favourite. They also enjoyed a fun **a**pple printing craft experience.

During week two the children had some fun making **a**pple slinkies. As the children spiraled the **a**pples they practiced saying the '**a**' sound. We then enjoyed our **a**pple slinkies for **a**fternoon tea, yum yum!







It has been a great start to the year and I have loved getting to know our new preschool friends and hearing from those returning about which group they are now in, which is very important! The children have shared information about themselves and their families as they worked, and have already worked out that when I come in it is for something different each week in the preschool programme.



**Preschool Bunting** – The preschoolers had lots of fun decorating their person outline that was to become part of our bunting. Great creativity was shown as they decorated their clothes. Look up as you come into preschool and you can see all the children holding hands.



**Chinese Lanterns** – To celebrate Chinese New Year the children made Chinese lanterns to take home. Great fine motor practice as they cut along the penciled lines and then glued decorative paper at the top and bottom of their lanterns. The children loved the fact they had a handle to carry their lantern.



**'Annie Apple' Apple Tree** – We created our own Apple Tree when the sound 'a' was the focus in the Phonemic Awareness Programme. The children cut out their own apples and then traced the letter 'a' under their name. Lots of children had names that started with the sound 'a' and we thought of lots of other words we knew as well that started with the 'a' sound. When the children pass the tree on the wall they love to look for their apple and point it out.





## Return and Earn Project

As you will have learned by the flyer sent home about our Return and Earn Project, we are pleased to report that we managed to raise \$200 during 2020. This will be donated to WIRES to help with wildlife that was sadly affected so badly by the fires and floods causing much harm. Not only will we be helping injured animals, by having continued discussions during group times, we are able to make the children aware of helping less fortunate and the importance of recycling to reducing landfill which has such a devastating effect on our precious planet, by giving one of the many practical solutions to this problem. 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.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## Book Exchange Basket

Near the front gate you will find our book exchange basket. This has been introduced as a way of recycling books that may otherwise have been discarded. Please feel free to enjoy these preloved books donated from home, any unwanted children's books can be donated by giving these to an educator to be sanitised before being placed in the exchange basket. (Please see note sent home recently)



## Nude Lunch Boxes

The children are developing a wonderful sense of responsibility when it comes to looking after our environment. At Mt Colah Preschool we are keen to promote nude lunch boxes which basically means minimal packaging to reduce the amount of plastic going into the bin at the end of the day.



## Gardening and Rain Water

Over the past few weeks the children have been helping tend to our sensory garden full of herbs, every few days they venture out into the garden with educators to water the herbs ensuring an abundance of things for the children to explore their senses. In the coming weeks, we will also be clearing out the tubs and replanting some carrots and tomatoes soon. On the hotter days this month, we also made use of the rainwater we had collected to delve into some water play, exploring concepts such as sinking and floating and buoyancy.

## Recycling Bins

The children are starting to understand the recycling bins used each day at preschool. A yellow bin used for paper waste, grey bin for soft plastics which is then taken to Coles to be recycled. At meal times, the children dispose of fruit and vegetables in a special bin which is fed to our worm farm. This produces fertiliser which we happily share with families to feed plants at home. The bin to recycle ink cartridges and photocopier tone is situated next to the interactive screen. Parents are welcome to bring in any ink cartridges from home to recycle.





## Chinese New Year

Through the week of February 8<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the new Chinese Lunar New Year of the Ox. Our friend Bianca wore her traditional Chinese dress and brought in some items which are significant to the celebrations of the Lunar New Year which she shared with the group. It is an important part of our educational programme for children and families to share their culture as we explore diversity through culture, heritage, background and tradition within our community (*EYLF Learning Outcome 1 and 2*)

During group time we had discussions on special traditions to the Chinese culture during this time. We talked about typical Chinese New Year Foods and why they are eaten. Did you know fish is a symbol of good luck, wealth and health? And that long noodles are important as they symbolise good fortune and a long life. The children most enjoyed learning about the Dragon and Lion Dance which is performed to bring prosperity and good luck for the upcoming year. We listened along to the music and identified various instruments including drums, cymbals and gongs.

Educators also provided opportunity for children to further explore Chinese culture through resources such as puzzles, books and crafts.

Happy Chinese New Year!





## Quality Improvement Plan (QIP):

This month we have been practicing our lockdown procedures with the children. This aims to provide a safe and secure environment for our educators, children, families and visitors to the centre in the event of a threat, dangerous situation or natural disaster within the community. Further, the Preschool aims to minimise the risk of harm or the exposure to danger, for anyone on the premises through the implementation of this procedure.

The children have all done a great job of following the educators instructions during these times as we practice a variety of pretend scenarios from medical emergencies to snake sightings.

If you are ever present during a lockdown drill please follow educators instructions.



## Dates to Remember!

March 31st	Preschool Open Day (New Families to Preschool)
March 24th	Speech Screening—remember to return forms
March 29th (week of)	Walkathon—information to come
April 2nd	Good Friday—Preschool closed
April 5th	Easter Monday—Preschool closed

## Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten

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