

Mt Colah Preschool Kindergarten



a caring place to learn and grow

WALK-A-THON



Week of May 8th

(will be postponed if wet - fingers crossed!)

*Understanding that everyone, no matter how old or small can **make a difference in somebody else's life, is what our Walkathon is all about!***

Each year the Preschool organises a couple of fundraising events. The purpose of these events are for the children to actively participate in fun ways to raise some money, so they can learn about helping others. We spend time during the week of the Walkathon to talk with the children about the many different ways they can help others and participating in the Walkathon is just one of them. All monies raised by the children, during our fundraiser, are donated to the children's ward at Hornsby Hospital, to help provide care for sick children in our community. We will be holding our Walkathon in the week of May 8th and you should have received a note with the details. Please see your teacher if you have any questions.

Mothers Day Dinner - Thursday, May 11th

Information has been sent home to all families inviting our mums to get together to celebrate Mother's Day. We look forward to seeing you at the dinner. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Thank you!



May 2017

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Our Preschool Programme Past Month in Review

Sweetpeas We have had a busy and interesting time with the holiday program keeping the children engaged doing special activities that were organised. Over the last few weeks the children watched with anticipation as the eggs entrusted to us started hatching. It was exciting to watch the small chickens grow **so fast and the expressions of wonder on the children's faces as they got to hold the baby chicks, were so lovely to witness.** We also spoke about many different life cycles such as butterflies, frogs and plants. We looked at seeds of different fruit and vegetables discussing which seeds we can and cannot eat and we will organise to plant some of them in the garden. This has been a great opportunity to introduce the children to the wonders of nature. They were engaged and excited about the processes, developing social interaction and promoting caring and nurturing skills. Continuing with our fundamental movements, the Sweetpeas are not only developing physical skills but also pre-school skills, listening to instructions and turn taking. This can be very challenging and the children are doing so well, we are very proud of their efforts. These skills are important to help make the transition to school so much easier. We look forward to the new term and all its challenges.

Bluebells: Over the past few weeks, the Bluebells have been working on their scissors skills. This is a new activity for some children and it can be a bit tricky to start with as there is a lot to figure out – which hand do I use, how do I hold these, how do I make them move? Research tells us that being able to hold and use scissors helps to promote the hand skills that children need for optimal fine motor development and for an efficient pencil grip so it is important that we get off to a good start. At preschool, we have two types of scissors for the children to use and we usually start with the easigrip scissors (squeeze scissors). These are self-opening and only need a small squeeze to cut, allowing the child to gain that bit of confidence with their activity while still working the muscles necessary in their hand. We then have normal scissors. When the children are confident enough to use these, we encourage them in holding these properly, keeping their fingers and thumb in the correct position and working on cutting the paper. Everyone is enjoying participating in these activities and you may have seen some examples coming home! This is also a good activity to practice at home – give your child an old magazine, some scissors, paper and glue and ask them **to create a collage artwork. If you would like a chat about your child's scissors skills, please ask.**

Schoolies: What a great month the Schoolies have had. The Schoolies took a strong liking to space week and really engaged in all we had to offer. The children displayed curiosity as they asked multiple questions about space. We discussed the Solar System, Dwarf Planets, the Moon and Meteoroids. We did an experiment using the world globe and a torch, this was to help the children understand day time and night-time. We watched short clips on the iPad about gravity and how astronauts walk on the moon. The children then all sat in a circle and pretended to be Astronauts as they walked in slow motion with a bounce in their step. The children had various conversations with one another about space and information they **knew. Xavier said, "Steph, look all the planets go around the moon, but some have a longer way to go than others as they are further away". Anurina then said to Xavier, "The planets further away from the sun are the coldest".** They then went over to the solar system poster and furthered their investigation.



Scholastic Book Club

The first magazine of Term 2 should be out in the next few days! Keep an eye out for any \$2 special offers on. As usual, you can pay with your order to the preschool or you can order through the LOOP app.



Many thanks



Soft to the Touch!

Ella was touching Amber's hair and asked Amber *"Your hair is so soft. Is it made of silk?"*



Did you know that children are highly susceptible to choking on grapes and cherry tomatoes? It is recommended that parents cut grapes for their children lengthwise and again in half for small children. It is also a great idea to cut up cherry tomatoes for the kids as well.



Good Chat!

Ashton and Zoe L were happily sitting next to each other when Ashton looked at Zoe and said *"It's ok Mummy's always come back"* and hugged her. Zoe looked at Ashton and said *"Yeah, Mummy's always come back"*.

May Birthdays'

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

Cade 5 yrs
Sophie W. 4yrs
Harry 5 yrs
Alex P 5 yrs



Healthy Habits

Our Healthy Habits initiative is to support our Quality Improvement Plan item - *focussing on family and child health*. During May we will focus on the importance of fruits and vegetables.

Children learn by example



Most babies eat fruit and vegetables as one of their first solid foods. After the first year, you may notice your child is more fussy with food as they become more independent eaters. Often this fussiness with food includes fruit and vegetables. Parents may worry if their child starts to eat less fruit and vegetables from time to time, but usually it causes no harm. It is not possible to force children to eat more fruit and vegetables. The best way is for parents to enjoy fruit and vegetables as a daily part of your whole family's diet. It may take time, but this is how children learn best.

The benefits of fruit and vegetables

There are many reasons for everyone to enjoy eating a wide variety of vegetables and fruit. Vegetables and fruit provide important vitamins such as vitamin C and folic acid. They also have other plant substances that are thought important to help reduce the risk of some cancers and heart disease. Any amount is better than none. All Australians are encouraged to eat two fruit and five vegetables daily, but many children and adults do not. Sometimes children may expect 'tastier' high fat and sugar snack foods instead. Perhaps parents give up offering vegetables or fruit because it seems children often leave these on the plate or in the lunchbox. Continue to offer your child a variety of fruit and vegetables every day, and not just the type they like. Remember any amount is better than none and always try to find ways to include more.

Encourage your child to eat more fruit and vegetables

If you follow healthy eating habits, your child may eventually follow your lead. Keep offering fruit and vegetables in a variety of ways, as children are more likely to eat what is familiar to them. Never assume your child dislikes a particular fruit or vegetable. The next time you offer it may be the day they decide to try it. Children's tastes do change with age.

Involve your child in choosing which fruit or vegetables they would like.

- Take your child fruit and vegetable shopping and let them see, smell and feel the fruit and vegetables with you.
- Let your child help wash and prepare fruit and vegetables. Use this opportunity to explore new colours and shapes.
- Encourage their skills by letting them make a simple salad to serve themselves.
- Grow some vegetables or herbs in the garden or pot. Let your child water and nurture the plant.



Source: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/childrens-diet-fruit-and-vegetables>





Fun with Phonics

The Schoolies have really enjoyed meeting Dippy Duck

This month we met Dippy Duck who is a fun Letterland character that makes a 'D' sound instead of a quack sound.

All the Schoolies enjoyed singing the Letterland song and making a 'D' sound along with Dippy Duck. To further extend the children's phonemic awareness of Dippy Ducks special sound Steph and Zoe planned and implemented some great activities.

Steph played the children a popular tape story called 'Ugly Duckling' and focused on the 'D' words within the story, to follow on from this the children then played Duck Duck Goose, which was a fantastic way to encourage the children to make Dippy Duck's special sound.



Steph and the Schoolies also danced with ribbon sticks which they really enjoyed as dancing is becoming increasingly popular at Preschool. After dancing the children were provided with textas and paper and drew pictures that started with Dippy Duck's special sound. Zoe read 'Dribble the Dragon' and discussed Dippy Duck's special sound throughout the story and then played Dragon, Dragon, Crocodile with the children. The Schoolies LOVED this game, afterwards Olivia said **"I loved that game, Zoe"** and Jarly continued to ask for **"another turn"**. We had a lot of fun exploring Dippy Ducks special sound.



Zoe read 'Ernie Dances to the Didgeridoo' and supported the children to identify Dippy Duck's special sound throughout the story. After the story the children dot painted our very own interpretation of a Didgeridoo. This experience was a great way to incorporate Indigenous aspects into our Phonic Programme (*EYLF, Outcome 2 and Principles: respect for diversity*). The children responded positively to this and Anurina confidently pointed out **"Dot painting starts with D"**.





Fun with Phonics

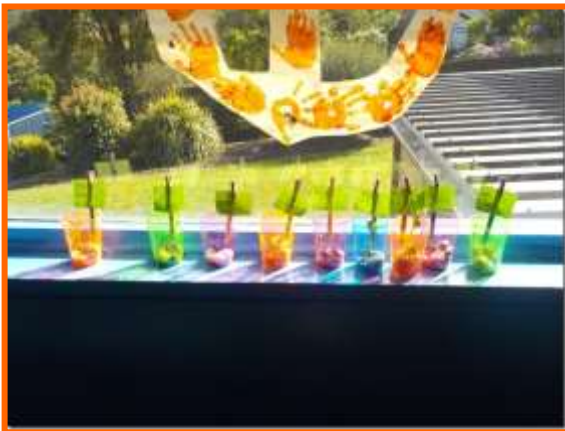
Revisiting the Term Sounds

We have also been doing some revision of all the Letterland characters we have met so far. Before beginning our revision the children were asked to identify the Letterland characters and we are proud to say they confidently identified all five characters we have met so far and made the correct sound to each character with minimal assistance from their educators. During our revision experiences we listened to each character's catchy song and spoke about some words that start with their special sound. The Schoolies are retaining a great deal of information and are developing their phonic awareness on a daily basis. *Well Done Schoolies!*



Update

Update: the beans the Schoolies planted after reading 'Jack and the Beanstalk' for Bouncy Ben have been grown nicely. The Schoolies have been watering them on a daily basis and are very proud of their beans (EYLF, Outcome 2).





Lots of group activities in LE in April and it's great to see the children working together to create some wonderful displays and tasty food to eat. The preschoolers are also happy to wait their turn and understand that everyone can't be first!



COOKING – Always a favourite and everyone did something in the process of creating our cornflake slice for afternoon tea. For this activity we used up many ingredients that were left over from other cooking experiences.



SPACE – There was great involvement by the children in creating our space background and then the individual astronauts. Children chose where to place their astronaut and for some it was a hard decision. Everyone had a favourite planet they wanted to tell me about.



SCIENCE – There was a lot of excitement as we all helped make playdough and were then able to colour our own piece to take home. The ingredients were discussed and we talked about how putting similar ingredients together in varying proportions, and with other ingredients, we can make so many different things – both food and to play with.



DISCO – Our disco ball was a great creation and when sticking the pieces on to the foam ball the children were very careful and followed my instructions perfectly when the glue was put on using a hot glue gun. There were plenty of questions and much discussion on how the glue gun works.



Want to be a great parent? Let your children be bored.

From books, arts and sports classes to iPads and television, many parents do everything in their power to entertain and educate their children. But what would happen if children were just left to be bored from time to time? How would it affect their development?

I began to think about boredom and children when I was researching the influence of television on children's storytelling in the 1990s. Surprised at the lack of imagination in many of the hundreds of stories I read by ten to 12 year-old children in five different Norfolk schools, I wondered if this might partly be an effect of TV viewing. Findings of earlier research had revealed that television does indeed reduce children's imaginative capacities.

For instance, a large scale study carried out in Canada in the 1980s as television was gradually being extended across the country, compared children in three communities – one which had four TV channels, one with one channel and one with none. The researchers studied these communities on two occasions, just before one of the towns obtained television for the first time, and again two years later. The children in the no-TV town scored significantly higher than the others on divergent thinking skills, a measure of imaginativeness. This was until they, too, got TV – when their skills dropped to the same level as that of the other children.

The apparent stifling effect of watching TV on imagination is a concern, as imagination is important. Not only does it enrich personal experience, it is also necessary for empathy – imagining ourselves in someone else's shoes – and is indispensable in creating change. The significance of boredom here is that children (indeed adults too) often fall back on television or – these days – a digital device, to keep boredom at bay.



Some years after my study, I began to notice certain creative professionals mentioning how important boredom was to their creativity, both in childhood and now. I interviewed some of them. One was writer and actress Meera Syal. She related how she had occupied school holidays staring out of the window at the rural landscape, and doing various things outside her "usual sphere", like learning to bake cakes with the old lady next door. Boredom also made her write a diary, and it is to this that she attributes her writing career. "It's very freeing, being creative for no other reason than that you freewheel and fill time," she said.

Similarly, well-known neuroscientist Susan Greenfield said she had little to do as a child and spent much time drawing and writing stories. These became the precursors of her later work, the scientific study of human behaviour. She still chooses paper and pen over a laptop on a plane, and looks forward with relish to these constrained times.

Sporting, musical and other organised activities can certainly benefit a child's physical, cognitive, cultural and social development. But children also need time to themselves – to switch off from the bombardment of the outside world, to daydream, pursue their own thoughts and occupations, and discover personal interests and gifts

Continued over



Want to be a great parent? Let your children be bored

We don't have to have a particular creative talent or intellectual bent to benefit from boredom. Just letting the mind wander from time to time is important, it seems, for everybody's mental wellbeing and functioning. A study has even shown that, if we engage in some low-key, undemanding activity at same time, the wandering mind is more likely to come up with imaginative ideas and solutions to problems. So it's good for children to be helped to learn to enjoy just pottering – and not to grow up with the expectation that they should be constantly on the go or entertained.

How to handle a bored child

Parents often feel guilty if children complain of boredom. But it's actually more constructive to see boredom as an opportunity rather than a deficit. Parents do have a role, but rushing in with ready-made solutions is not helpful. Rather, children need the adults around them to understand that creating their own pastimes requires space, time and the possibility of making a mess (within limits – and to be cleared up afterwards by the children themselves).

They will need some materials too, but these need not be sophisticated – simple things are often more versatile. We've all heard of the toddler ignoring the expensive present and playing with the box it came in instead. For older children, a magnifying glass, some planks of wood, a basket of wool, and so on, might be the start of many happily occupied hours.

But to get the most benefit from times of potential boredom, indeed from life in general, children also need inner resources as well as material ones. *Qualities such as curiosity, perseverance, playfulness, interest and confidence allow them to explore, create and develop powers of inventiveness, observation and concentration.*

These also help them to learn not to be deterred if something doesn't work the first time, and try again. By encouraging the development of such capacities, parents offer children something of lifelong value.

If a child has run out of ideas, giving them some kind of challenge can prompt them to continue to amuse themselves imaginatively. This could range from asking them to find out what kind of food their toy dinosaurs enjoy in the garden to going off and creating a picture story with some friends and a digital camera.

Most parents would agree that they want to raise self-reliant individuals who can take initiatives and think for themselves. But filling a child's time for them teaches nothing but dependence on external stimulus, whether material possessions or entertainment. Providing nurturing conditions and trusting children's natural inclination to engage their minds is far more likely to produce independent, competent children, full of ideas.

In fact, there's a lesson here for all of us. Switching off, doing nothing and letting the mind wander can be great for adults too – we should all try to do more of it.



Article by: Teresa Belton is a Visiting Fellow at the School of Education & Lifelong Learning, University of East Anglia.





Quality Improvement Plan (QIP): Late last year, Educators attended training on a programme called "Move to Learn Movement Programme".

The focus of this programme is on physical movement and how specific movements support brain development and learning in early childhood and the programme has been offered as a school programme in many primary schools. Integrating the philosophy of this programme into our daily routines is part of our QIP this year as a further support to each child's development and readiness for learning at school. We have started this year by including the warm up exercises of the programme and a song with specific movements called "Catch a Brainwave" into our morning music and movement session. Already the Educators have noted the children more settled and focussed following this session. For more information on the *Move to Learn Movement Programme* please visit the website at: <http://www.movetolearn.com.au/>



Dates to Remember!

Week of May 8th:

Walkathon

May 11th:

Mother's Day Dinner

June 12th:

Queen's Birthday Public Holiday—Closed

June 15th:

Excursion to Fruit Shop (Schoolies Only)



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