



Mitcham Pre School Centre Newsletter

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Term 1
Newsletter 3

This week at kindy!

On Thursday and Friday of last we commenced our focus of learning

"Literacy in the garden"

We talked about how we are going to learn about literacy, the garden, (eg vegie garden), researching creatures that live in the garden (mini beasts). We have associated literacy with our literacy room and asked the children what do we have in the literacy room.....books.

So we brainstormed our ideas in the large group in

- *What is a book?*
- *What do you notice about books?*

We will continue exploring these questions this week in our small groups, and include aspects of the "Conventions of print".

(I have attached information about the conventions of print—crucial pre reading skills)

To support our learning this week we will have inside

- Letter of the week table—"s" for spiny leaf insect (literacy)
- Literacy corner with story felt boards & magnetic boards and letters (literacy)
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar Story table (literacy . Language)
- Insect word cards at the drawing table (fine motor / literacy)
- Light table with glitter flowers (understanding our world)
- Box construction (problem solving)
- Painting at the easels (creativity)
- Caterpillar gluing (numeracy)
- Picking sunflower petals (fine motor)
- Number stones (numeracy)
- Construction set (problem solving)
- Sandpit with pipes, helmets, spades, vests (sensory)
- Hat shop (dramatic play)
- Basketball (gross motor)
- Pirates in the sand tray (dramatic play / sensory)
- Home corner (dramatic play)
- Marble painting (tracking)
- Number hunts with binoculars (numeracy)
- Construction set—Widgets (problem solving)

On Wednesday and Thursday we will be cooking with the zucchini's from the garden.

Have you seen our caterpillars? Many have formed their chrysalis. It is exciting to watch and see how they change.

Have you seen our spiny leaf insects?

It's a busy week at kindy!

Outside there will be

CYH Screening

All blue group spaces for Child & Youth Health Checks on

Monday February 20th

are booked.

I still have spaces for gold group for the health checks. If you would like to book a time, please come and see me.

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Literacy Indicators Wall

Year of the dragon / snake

As part of our planning and assessment & reporting process, we use the mandated "Preschool Numeracy and Literacy Indicators", which were introduced in 2016. Throughout the year, there will be many experiences and activities implemented to support children's development of literacy & numeracy skills in accordance with these indicators. We have established a photo and information wall on the literacy indicators, in the passageway. Throughout term 1, photos will be added to the wall depicting children engaging in a number of literacy tasks and experiences. We hope the information and photos provided on the wall will be one way of informing you, of the different aspects of literacy and the experiences we provide to assist children in developing these very important skills.

We have been collecting data at kindy (numeracy task), where by we have been finding out who was born in the year of the dragon (born in 2012) and who was born in the year of the snake (born in 2013). The children have then written their name on the appropriate sheet (literacy tasks—I represent my world symbolically).

Come and have a look at our display.

Investigation station

This week we will introduce a new activity to the children called "Calling all Gardeners". This is a numeracy and literacy investigation station and it will be located on the verandah, outside the kindy gates.

There will be a table with an activity and children and families can investigate the question as you arrive in the morning. There will be a sheet for your child to record their answer / predication. The activity will be outside from Tuesday—Friday and we then find out the answer on the following Monday. A new question will then be out on the table on Tuesday.

For example this week, we have 3 zucchinis from the garden. Your child has to predict which zucchini is the heaviest (1 or 2 or 3). (NUMERACY TASK) They write their name and the number next to their name. (LITERACY TASK)

As this is a new experience staff will explain to the children what they need to do on Tuesday & Wednesday and the activity will be out on Thursday and Friday.

Please note, its not compulsory to participate. We realise that some people are rushing off to work so may not have the time.

We hope you have fun working on these maths / numeracy & literacy tasks together.

Challenge tasks

We have introduced the concept of "challenges". Challenges are tasks, or experiences, that can be a little difficult or "tricky" to do / participate in. Challenges can some times make us feel frustrated, worried or anxious. However, if we take a risk, have a go and persist at the task, we can have success. It might take time, but not to give up. Keep trying.

Achievements are very satisfying. They make us feel proud, happy, fulfilled and successful. Overcoming a challenge helps build self esteem and a belief in ourselves as successful learners.

We have had the jumping challenge, where the children had to jump from the bench and hit a moving ball in a bag (they land on the mat). Some children have practiced over and over again, showing persistence.

This week, we are introducing challenge puzzles. These puzzles will be indicated by a yellow star. Having a go at a "tricky" puzzle, persisting and not giving up, developing strategies to complete the puzzle rather than just walking away eg asking a friend or teacher for help, are skills that can be applied to any task or experience.

As the term / year continues, we will add in further challenge tasks, encouraging children to take a risk, have ago, and persist—important skills for life and learning. (Yellow stars indicate the challenge tasks)

Tired children

I have to say that your children are "super stars". They have all settled really well into preschool. Whilst there can be a few anxious moments for some children as their parents leave in the morning, generally children have settled exceptionally well into routines etc. For children to manage 2 & 1/2 days, in a new environment with staff they are getting to know, it is amazing.

THEY HAVE AMASED US.

You may notice that your child is really tired after only 2 weeks of preschool. Some parents have com-

mented on their child's poor behaviour at home and how their "wheels fall off" for the most simple things. The end of week 2, the children were very tired. At the end of the day, most children are exhausted.

As I said last newsletter, they have had so many things to adjust too & cope with.

You will find that over the next week or so, your child will continue to build resilience and stamina with the full days and will not be as tired. You will find they will plateau but as term 1 draws to an

end, the tiredness will escalate again. This is all a normal process in coping & adjusting with preschool, home and any other extra activities they participate in such as child care, swimming etc.

Remember they are only 4 years old (& some are still 3 years old)

Hot weather

Last week, we experienced extreme weather conditions, with very high temperatures and high humidity. By lunchtime of each day, our old evaporative air conditioner struggled to keep the centre even relatively cool. It made it unbearable for children and staff. (All evaporative air conditioners struggle when it is humid)

However, the children showed great resilience, managing to get through the day.

We implemented our "Hot weather policy" by

- having short periods of play outside in the morning eg 10am—11am, then 11.30am—12noon.(children could choose whether they played outside)
- If outside, they played only in the shaded areas and running was banned!!
- We were all inside by 12noon
- There were constant reminders about drinking

- We refilled water bottles frequently
- We had spray bottles to squirt and cool us down
- We laid down at times to rest our tired bodies.
- At 2.10pm we watched "Miniscules" a DVD about insects (ties in with our learning) until 2.30pm just to rest our bodies

Managing these conditions when they are so new to the preschool, was a challenge, but they showed great resilience and optimism.

We are looking forward to a much cooler week, when we can all sleep better, learn, play, discover without the heat stress.

Checking pockets

Most of the information I share with you goes to the APP and email. However, there are times that I do put information in your child's note pockets for you to collect.

Can you check the pockets regularly so that you are not missing out on information. I noticed at the end of last week, there are still lots of notes in the pockets. This information related to our curriculum for term 1 and diary dates.

Most weeks I do send out a newsletter or information on "This week at kindy" to the APP and email. It is important to read this information, to ensure that you are informed about what is happening at preschool, The term plan, term overview and calendar has now been sent to the APP and email. Thank you

A & B choices

Over the past few years, we have implemented a behaviours strategy program called "A & B Choices". It is a behaviour program whereby we talk about

A choices being good choices

(choosing to share, work cooperatively, listen to friends, teachers, parents, include friends in play, take turns, care for our friends, complete a task etc)

B choices being not good choices.

(hurting friends, not listening to friends, teachers, parents, unable to share or work cooperatively, breaking something that a friend has worked on, not following rules or routines, yelling, being unfriendly eg saying your not my friend etc)

We have now introduced the program to the children and it will be used on an ongoing basis.

If a child is making a "B" choice, (eg throwing sand) we would say

"You are making a "B" choice when you throw sand. You need to make an "A" choice, what could you do?"

It helps them differentiate between good and not good choices and generally in most cases, helps them to change their choice / behaviour. If they continue to make a "B" choice such as throwing sand, they are then

Rosie and Wowie

We have 2 teddy bears for both gold group & blue group. Their names are Rosie and Wowie. These teddy bears go home each weekend to children's homes, where they have wonderful adventures with the families. As part of the experience, we ask that you record your child's / families adventures in the book provided, by writing a story. You can add photos and your child can include drawings. The teddy bears are then returned on

redirected to another area of play.

Please note, we never refer to "B" choices as "bad" choices as we don't want to give children the message they are bad. They are simply making a "B" choice—a not good choice.

We have found the "A & B choices" program, a really effective way of children learning about behaviours—and the choices they can make. I have never found using strategies such as time out / sitting on a naughty chair / standing in a naughty corner etc very ineffective. Children in these situations, generally do not learn about behaviour and will keep on misbehaving (making B choices).

In situations where children continue to make "B choices" rather than have time out, we would use an approach of "sitting, resting, thinking time" to get themselves back in control. It may be sitting on the bench outside, sitting on the mat or couch inside just for a few minutes. But it is never on a time out chair or in a designated room or in a naughty corner. Once they have rested we may then say "You look like you are ready to make an A Choice". Children will then get on with playing & learning in a positive frame of mind.

Monday where your child shares their story with the group. We have lots of children but only 2 teddies per group. Everyone will have a turn, but your child may just have to wait. It isn't easy to wait for a turn, but everyone is guaranteed to get a turn.

We will send Rosie & Wowie home this weekend.

We look forward to hearing about the many wonderful adventures of Rosie and Wowie.

Last year, we found there were times during the year that we didn't need to make reference to the A & B choices (things were running smoothly in terms of behaviour and getting along). Then there would be times children needed prompts and reminders about the choices they were making.

Children may take the "A & B Choices" home and make reference to it. You may even wish to use the concepts at home. Don't hesitate to speak with one of the staff if you want more information about the program.

Toys from home

Many children have been bringing toys from home to play with at kindy. We ask that children keep these toys at home (or in the car for after preschool). It is very distressing for children, when the toys become lost or when a peer wants to play with them. I know some

children take toys to child care for "Show & tell". We don't have show and tell at preschool, with toys. So to avoid distressed children, **KEEP TOYS AT HOME.**

Thank you

Assessment and reporting / conversations with staff

During your child's year at kindy it is a requirement for staff to monitor and assess their progress. This happens through a number of processes.

1. In their first term, staff will informally assess your child in some key literacy / numeracy & fine motor areas to give us a "picture" of where they are in their development. This occurs on a one on one basis, generally mid term 1, once the children have settled into routines.
2. Following the informal assessment Laura, Amber or myself will give you some feedback via an informal conversation. We make a time to see you either at the beginning or end of the day, requiring 10–15 minutes of your time.
3. Throughout the year, staff will continue to monitor your child's progress through observations, conversations with children & parents, at funtastics, taking photos, collecting examples of their work and using learning stories
4. Through out the year, we provide feedback on children's progress to families, as required. Staff and / or parents may initiate conversations to discuss your child's progress.
5. During your child's 3rd or 4th term at preschool, we again informally assess each child. At this point, our assessment is more comprehensive as we are covering a wider range of literacy & language skills / numeracy skills / motor skills / social skills

6. Again following this informal assessment, Laura, Amber or myself will make time to meet with you, to provide feedback on your child's progress & development
7. In their final term, this information is formatted in a "Statement of Learning" that is forwarded on to your child's school.

Assessing and reporting on your child's progress is an important part of the work we do. Keeping you informed on their progress and working together to achieve positive learning outcomes, is imperative for your child.

We look forward to providing you with some feedback following our informal assessing after weeks 5 & 6

If you have any concerns or feel you need to share some information about your child, don't hesitate to speak with one of the staff.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Just a reminder that the
Annual General Meeting
is next

Monday February 20th
7.pm for a 7.30pm start.

Forming a Governing Council is important for the running of the centre in 2017. Information about the Governing Council was sent out last week.

If you have any queries about joining the council or would like more information, please don't hesitate to speak with me.

I hope you can join the Governing Council for 2017. I look forward to working with you.

I realize that parents are keen to talk with me about their child, sharing information from home or finding out how they are going at kindy. Often I have a line up of parents waiting to speak with me. The other staff members of our team (Laura, Amber, Carol, Robyn, Lyn) are highly skilled teachers / ECW's, who are more than willing to assist you.

So to avoid waiting in line to see me, please also use these staff members as your points of contact. They will always share the information with me, and if necessary, I will follow up with you at a later time (eg next day).

We have a wonderful staff team, who work closely together, to ensure that your child is supported in the best way possible. We ensure that information is shared so that parents don't feel they have the need to inform every staff member. By telling one staff member, you can be assured that your concerns or ideas will be shared as a team.

Finally

Thank you as always for your continued support.

It is always appreciated.

Chris, Laura, Amber, Carol,
Robyn, Lyn, Pat