



Mitcham



Preschool  
Centre

## Mitcham Pre School Centre Newsletter

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### Starting preschool

What a fabulous start we had to the school year. 77 children commenced preschool on the first 3 days, making it a very busy time for everyone. This year, parents / carers were unable to bring the children into the kindy room due to COVID restrictions. However, the children were so resilient and brave, coming in on their own. They settled really well when considering it was their first day in a new place, they didn't know routines and were only vaguely familiar with the staff. Some children did know each other from child care or friendships outside the centre but there were many children, who didn't know anyone. What a fabulous effort in coping. There were a few children who did feel teary when their parents left, but they settled well with the support of the staff. Children are amazing..... they are more resilient than sometimes we give them credit for!!! They certainly made us feel very proud.

When starting preschool, there are so many adjustments, new routines and rules to learn, people to get to know. You can equate starting preschool & school with starting a new job. It can be very overwhelming. For exam-

ple your child is

- Learning the teachers names
- Learning the children's names
- Following new routines (when is it mat time, when do we eat snack, when is lunch time, when can you play outside, when you do you pack your bag to go home etc, etc)
- Learning that we play inside until we have had large group time / small story groups.
- Sitting & listening when on the mat (understanding when they are allowed to talk on the mat and when they need to listen to adults)
- Making choices about what they play with
- Making connections with other children
- Sharing, turn taking and working cooperatively.
- Working in a group at mat time
- Learning where they put their drink bottle, lunch box each morning.
- Learning when do they eat their snack & when do they have their lunch (this has been confusing for some children as they want what is in the lunch box during the morning!! Lucky lunch boxes are put away in the crates )
- Learning that they can get a drink from their water bottles at any time—not just when an adult suggests it.
- Learning lots of new rules such as walking inside, come to the mat when you hear the triangle.
- Understanding about being a good friend eg friends are kind & caring. Friends do not hurt each other
- Learning about our behavior strategy program—"A & B choices"
- Going to the toilet independently
- Remembering to wash their hands before eating snack & lunch.
- Helping pack up
- Learning new songs and games

### Term 1 Newsletter 2

*I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mitcham Primary leadership, staff and students for making us feel so welcome.*

*They have been so supportive in ensuring that we are settling into the school. Nothing has been too much trouble!  
It has been a very welcoming, friendly and supportive environment for our staff and children.*

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## Starting preschool (cont)

- Learning to get help from an adult at kindy
- Having to pack their bag at the end of the day and put it on the verandah.

These are just a few snippets of the things that happen everyday at preschool that involves learning and understanding. No wonder they are exhausted at the end of the day!!

You should be very proud of your child/ children. They have been amazing!!

Over the next couple of weeks the children may continue to be very tired as they continue to adapt to their new environment. They will eventually become more resilient and adapt to full days and the many routines.

## Nature Playground

The Nature Playground at Mitcham Primary is wonderful. The children have already been so engaged in the learning outdoors.

Our morning goes as follows

- 8.30am—start
- 8.50am—large group time
- 9.10am—small groups
- 9.30am—outside for snack (under the tree by our room)
- Then over to nature play, when finished eating, until 11am (when we go back inside for group time)

Already, the children have been very engaged and involved in so many ways such as,

- Using gross motor skills to jump from one log to the next
- Developing confidence and agility in Climbing a tree
- Digging to find insects
- Using their imagination and Looking for "real power rangers clothes" and buried treasure
- Using their skills to move logs (some quite large and heavy) to build cubbies
- Moving rocks to build forts, homes for the insects, campfires
- Waiting their turn on the swing (which is very popular)
- Playing hide and seek
- Climbing a rock mountain

- Digging in the nature play sandpit with sticks & rocks.

The examples of creative, imaginative and physical play has been endless.

It has been a place where children have connected with others and begun to build friendships. There are no toys to share and resolve issues over. Just items from nature and a sense of wonder.

It is truly a wonderful place to play. Just imagine what they will be able to do in the nature play area, as they continue to build their skills over the term.

We use the "colourful playground" (blue & yellow equipment) in 2 shorter burst between 12noon—12.30pm. We then go inside and have lunch and use indoor resources until 1.45pm. We then head back out to the colourful playground from 1.45pm—2.15pm. (following the school lunch time). Here children use their gross motor skills to climb, balance and coordinate them selves over a range of equipment. The sandpit near the kindy room is also used at this time.

The 2 varied playgrounds provide lots of opportunities to build a range of skills.

## Catch ups

The first week of preschool was very busy supporting 44 Children in gold group & 33 children in blue group to settle in to routines. It meant that at the beginning of the day and at the time of dismissing children, there were very limited opportunities to talk with parents about how their child is going. The staff's priority is to manage the children eg help them with their morning routines, separate successfully from their parents and then settle into the morning mat time routine. At the end of the day, we needed to support the children on the mat as we farewell each child individually.

As the children become more familiar and comfortable at preschool, it will "free staff up" to have those conversations with parents. I imagine this will happen over the coming week.

If at anytime you have concerns (or want to share information with us or "check in" with how your child is going), and we seem really busy, you are most welcome to phone and speak with me or send an email. I will always respond at the end of the day and schedule a time to chat with you.

COVID has made it difficult also to have those conversations and build relationships with parents, as you cannot come in to the room. As yet.

Lets hope by the time we get back to our preschool, parents / carers can access the centre.

Later in the term, (after week 6) Maddie, Suzi or myself will schedule a time with each parent, for a parent / educator conversation. More information will be in the next newsletter.

### Photo board

This week, every child will have there photo taken and placed on our special indoor photo board. It builds a sense of belonging and identity—belonging to a group. It is a place where children identify their friends and of course, they just love finding their own photo.

I hope you will get to see our photo board soon.

## Drinking at preschool

We have had a lovely start to the term with the weather. In any weather, but especially when it is warm / hot, we give the children lots of reminders during the day, to drink water. We stop and have regular drink breaks eg before / after mat times, before & during / after lunch. Even though we remind children constantly to drink, some will just have a sip at a time. We remind them to have long drinks out of their water bottles. During the day, staff will check water bottles and remind children individually. We also fill up the empty / part full water bottles many times during the day. If your child comes home with a full bottle of water, it is because the bottle has been filled. Not because they haven't had a drink!!

We take many measures to ensure your child has water and they drink regularly.

Can you also remind your child to drink lots of water at kindy..... Not just a sip but a big drink. Many thanks for your support.

## Snacks and lunches

Can I just remind you about snacks and lunch.

**SNACKS STAY IN YOUR CHILD'S BAG** so they can access them during the day.

**LUNCHES GO IN THE SPECIAL BOXES ON THE VERANDAH.** Once everyone has arrived, these boxes are stored inside. Lunches are kept separate to ensure that children do not eat their lunch during the day.

Some families have kept snacks in lunch boxes which does distress children, when looking for snacks in their bags.

Thank you for your support.

## Applying sunscreen

At preschool, we encourage children to develop independence in a number of ways, including applying their own sunscreen after lunch. Children access the sunscreen under the supervision of educators and then rub the sunscreen into face / arms / legs.

We noticed last week, that many children were unsure how to apply sunscreen placing it close to their eyes and mouth. It would be great if they could practice at home so they can feel more confident when applying sunscreen at preschool.

We will assist children who are feeling unsure with the view that they will become independent in applying their own sunscreen.

Developing independence skills helps children to feel confident and develop positive self-esteem which is so important in life.

**Sunscreen is applied at preschool after lunch. If your child requires their own sunscreen, please let one of the staff know.**

**If you haven't had a chance to apply sunscreen before leaving home in the morning, we have plenty available for you to use.**

## Eating at preschool

In the first week, we noticed some children were anxious about sitting and eating snack. Some children ate all their snack whilst others may have only had a small portion of their food. Rather than place undue pressure & anxiety on your child around eating snack, we were flexible with how much they ate. Once comfortable and familiar with children, adults & routines they will eat all or most of their snack.

With lunch time, we make sure that the children eat all their food that you provide or at least the greatest majority of it. We eat in small groups in different areas of the centre, supervised by a staff member. Children have relaxation, wash their hands, have their lunch, put on sunscreen, then play with the resources in that room until everyone has finished. If they have been unsure about eating snack, at least we know they have eaten all of their lunch. Most children have not wanted afternoon snack.

It takes time for some children to sit and eat with others, to understand and follow routines and to feel comfortable in a new environment. Once settled in, you will find they will eat all the food provided (unless lunch boxes are over loaded)

If you have any concerns at any-time, about your child eating at kindy, please don't hesitate to let one of the staff know.

As part of our sustainability focus, which includes the learning within our curriculum, the policies and centre practices, we aim to reduce the preschools contribution to landfill. As a result, we send home any plastic, foil, yoghurt containers, cheese wrappers etc that children bring as part of their snack or lunch. This way, we ensure that we are limiting how much rubbish we send to landfill.

During the term, when children are more familiar with routines at lunch time, they will often rinse out their shop bought yoghurt containers before putting them back in their lunchbox.



## Children's work folders

## Term 1 Fees

There are many ways that we collect information / data about your child's progress at preschool. These include photos, collecting work examples, writing learning stories. We have a system of storing this work, which is accessible to both children and families. In the main room (in our quiet corner), we have set up a folder for each child. Your child's folder is clearly labeled and a photo has been placed in the front of the folder. Folders are stored on our shelving in gold or blue group. Work examples in the folders will include information about the intended learning outcomes for the activity, which are based on our curriculum "The Early Years Learning Framework" and / or the "Preschool literacy & numeracy indicators"

Once parents are allowed back in the preschool, you will be able to look through the folder with their child. The best time to do this will be at the beginning and / or end of the day. We have organized the room with chairs for you to sit in, browse and discuss the work in the folder. Obviously, it is early in the year, so there are limited work examples in the folders.

However, as we move through the term (& year), the folders will evolve. Feel free to come and see your child's folder, even at this early stage. We will talk with the children this week, about their folders.

*This week at preschool the children will draw a picture of themselves for their folder. This will be their first piece of work in their folder. It is amazing to see just how much their skills develop over the year.*

Term 1 fees notice will be handed out this week.

Fees for term 1 are \$220.00 which includes fundraising & excursion levies) Fees are due for payment by

**Friday February 19th**

If you have any queries about the fees please do not hesitate to speak with me. All conversations will be in strictest confidence.

Fees can be paid by cash or direct debit to the preschool account.

If paying by cash, can you please put the correct amount in an envelope and hand it to one of the staff at drop off / pick up.

## AGM

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**INFORMATION WILL BE OUT THIS WEEK.**

Please keep the date free.

**Monday February 15th,**  
**7pm for a 7.30pm start.**

BSB 105-084

Account no: 32323 1040

Account name—Mitcham  
Preschool Centre

## Bike Parking

Children are wanting to ride their bikes / scooters to kindy. Unfortunately, the bike shed is not open during the hours we are at preschool. Therefore, the school have allowed the preschool children to leave their bikes carefully placed inside the wooden fence that surrounds the garden next to kindy. The bikes / scooters **need to be**

- chained to the wooden fence
- Inside the fence (not on the area where our sign in table is located) so as not to create a trip hazard.
- Cannot be accessed during the day

Please also note, the bikes & scooters are not the responsibility of the school or preschool. Happy riding!

### Hot Cross Buns

It is hot cross bun season but we class hot cross buns as "sometimes food" due to their sugar content, especially the chocolate chip ones. Therefore we **DO NOT** have hot cross buns in our nutrition policy. Hot cross buns are great for after preschool / weekend treats but please do not send them to kindy for snack or lunch. Many thanks for your support.

## A & B choice behavior strategy

At our preschool we use a behaviour 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, just commencing to introduce 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 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. 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.

## Information to the APP

Over the next week a lot of information will be sent the APP / email

including

- term 1 curriculum plan
- term 1 overview
- term 1 calendar—information about each event will be available closer to the date. Please keep the calendar handy
- Information on the Annual General Meeting.

I will also be updating general information on the APP



## Regular attendance at preschool

Regular attendance at preschool is so important for a number of reasons.

- Children benefit from the maximum education opportunities by attending preschool for their entitled 15 hours each week
- There is continuity of learning
- Continuity of friendships—more time to form friendships
- They access all programs, experiences and activities. They don't miss out on valuable learning opportunities
- Good practices in attendance are established whilst at preschool, in readiness for school

Of course when children are unwell or a family holiday is scheduled this impacts on your child's attendance at preschool. Children do need to be at home when sick to rest and recover & not spread infections to other children and adults. Family holidays are important and there are times when they do need to be scheduled during term time. Sometimes children just need a rest day especially if you have had a busy weekend or they are "juggling" child care and preschool. However it is important for your child to attend regularly, even on the half days. This will ensure that your child accesses all their entitled hours and benefits from all the learning opportunities available to them. If you need any further information about attendance at preschool, please don't hesitate to speak with one of the staff

## Weeks 2 & 3

Weeks 2 & 3 of each term are our data collection weeks. That means we submit our attendances for weeks 2 & 3, to DECD. Staffing is based on our enrolments. Not only does regular attendance support children in their learning & development, it ensures that we maintain high levels of staffing, which benefits your child.

## Attending Mondays

Mondays are important days in the week at preschool. On Mondays, we commence the learning program for the week, with the children. For example, we find out what is happening in the week, learn new creative activities etc. We also have our funtastics (motor coordination) program on Mondays spread throughout each term (excluding term 1). So it is an important day to attend even though it is a half day. So please make sure that your child attends regularly on a Monday (unless unwell) so they don't miss important learning opportunities. If you have any questions about attending Monday please don't hesitate to speak

## Finally

I want to finish the newsletter by thanking This has been a long newsletter with lots of information. I hope you have made it to the end.

Thank you as always for your  
continued support.

It is always  
appreciated.

Chris, Maddie, Suzie, Lyn, Robyn, Karen