



Mitcham Pre School Centre Newsletter

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**Term 3
Newsletter 1**

This week at kindy

This week we will continue on our focus of learning

"My place in the world"

Our inquiry focus will be **Celebrating our Australian identity—What do we know about Australian Culture?**

In our small groups, We will explore cities / landmarks / food / animals associated with Australian culture.

In our small groups we will also read books on Australian culture.

To support our learning we will have in the main room

- Home corner with Chinese restaurant (dramatic play)
- Mark making table with a range of resources and Australian culture word cards to copy (Literacy / fine motor)
- Palette 1—Snails Pace Race (numeracy)
- Palette 2—Connect 4 Game (numeracy)
- Palette 3—tree house & people (dramatic play)
- Construction table with foam blocks and photos of Chi-

nese buildings / Great Wall of China (problem solving / observation skills)

- Numeracy table—Chinese numeral cards / white boards & textas (literacy / fine motor / numeracy)
- STEM centre with calculators, measuring tools, unifix blocks rubber band challenge (understanding our world)
- Story table—Wonky Donkey (Literacy)
- Sensory / calm area—range of resources (sensory skills)
- Challenge table—Australian animals matching game (numeracy)
- Fine motor table—Fuzzy felt pictures (fine motor / literacy)
- Number hunt (numeracy)
- Book corner with books, pillows, pegs & boards (literacy)

Inside in the creative room we have

- Easels with painting (creativity)

- Playdough with rolling pins / Chinese New Year Photos (sensory)
- Craft table with fine motor challenge task—Cutting Chinese lanterns (cutting skills)
- Magna boards (fine motor / tracking)

Outside we will have

- Black tray with ice, pebbles, rocks & sea creatures (sensory)
- Tea set with teddies (dramatic play)
- Plus there is the Nature Playground & the colourful playground to explore (creativity / gross motor skills)

Our numeracy focus this week is

- Number recognition / counting
- Recognising our group shapes

Our literacy focus will be

- Identifying our name cards and practice writing our name independently
- Introducing rhyme through games / stories

Our challenge tasks will be

- Number hunts (find the numbers hidden inside and tick them off the sheet)
- Challenge puzzles indicated by a yellow star
- Fine motor champion—Chinese lanterns

It's a busy week at kindy.

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Calendar to support literacy & numeracy skills

We have a term calendar. It is on the white notice board where the teacher sits at the front for group time. The calendar shows days of the week, months, numbers and events for term 1. We will use the calendar to

- Recognize the pattern of the days of the week
- Number recognition
- Counting down, counting on
- Developing an understanding of months of the year
- celebrate birthdays
- Plus it will help us know & remember important kindy events

Calendars provide wonderful literacy & numeracy learning opportunities. Also children really work well when they are informed, know routines etc. ! For some children, changes in routines suddenly "sprung on" them, can be stressful.



Family Picnics

In week 6 we are having family picnics for gold & blue group families. The purpose of the picnic is for families to get to meet & socialise. The picnics will be held at Mitcham Reserve, Old Belair Rd, 5.30pm—7pm.

Blue group picnic will be held on Tuesday March 3rd

Gold group picnic will be held on Wednesday March 4th

Last year, the picnics were a great success, with a large number of families attending. It provided a wonderful opportunity for children to play, parents to meet & mingle. From this occasion, many strong friendships were formed both for children & parents, which remained throughout the year.

A note has been placed in your child's note pocket this week. We hope you can make it to our family picnic.

Children are so busy at kindy everyday in so many different ways. We have so many children who love painting, drawing and / or box construction. However by the end of the day, when they are so tired, they may have forgotten to look for their painting or box construction.

- Box constructions are on the sign in table
- Paintings are outside on the peg racks at the end of the day

So please check with your child if they have completed a painting or box construction. Otherwise they do get placed in the recycle bins, if they cant be recycled within our program.

Developing independence

One important learning outcome for children in their year at preschool is developing independence. Not just independence in leaving their family each day and remaining & coping in the care of staff at preschool, but developing independence skills. That is, developing skills to manage everyday tasks without the support of adults. For example, putting on their own socks and shoes, washing their hands before eating, wiping their own bottom, finding their own snack in their box, hanging up their painting, putting on a smock, getting their own jumper on or off etc, etc. We know they are only 4 years old (and some are still 3 years old). However, at school there are high expectations by teachers that they are independent and manage these "life skills" without support of adults. So the kindy year, is the perfect time to encourage your child's independence.

We have found many children have limited skills in managing tasks independently. Lots of children are expecting adults "to do everything" for them. So we have started the process of encouraging independence. That is, with prompts & gentle persuasion we have expected them to "have a go" and try some everyday tasks such as putting on their socks & shoes. We talk them through the process, remind them they are "big kindy kids" and generally, they complete the tasks (even if some help is still required).

Being independent is empowering for your child. Believing in themselves, that they "can do it" and succeed in everyday tasks (and in other situations). Believing that adults feel they are worthwhile and capable, helps develop a positive self esteem. That is, a positive belief in themselves.

If your child relies on you to complete tasks, try and encourage independence starting with putting their pyjamas on by themselves. This time of the day is usually more relaxed rather than hustle of getting out of the house each morning. The weekend is also a good time to practice these tasks, where you generally have more time. Remember to give them plenty of time, lots of encouragement and praise and hints to step them through the process.

Independence skills are life skills. Skills your child will not only need at preschool, but at school, at work and in life. 4 years of age is the perfect time to help your child develop these skills. If you need any help & support, don't hesitate to speak with any on the staff. We are here to help.

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 sometimes 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 happy, proud, fulfilled and successful. Overcoming a challenge helps build self esteem and a belief in ourselves as successful learners.

We have introduced 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.

We have had the number hunt...finding numbers hidden inside. Once the children find the numbers, they tick them off their sheet of paper. The numbers can be hidden in tricky places and not easy to find. The children are encouraged to persist, not to give up, work with a friend to find the numbers.

"Challenge, persistence, hard work" are part of our part of our daily conversations.

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

These challenge tasks are all part of the work that we do at our preschool to support children to develop "Growth Mindsets". I will send out information on growth mindsets over the next few weeks.

Assessment and reporting / conversations with parents

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 in weeks 5 & 6, once the children have settled into routines.
2. Following the informal assessment Maddie, Suzi 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, Maddie, Suzi or myself will make time to meet with you, to provide feedback on your child's progress & development

6. 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

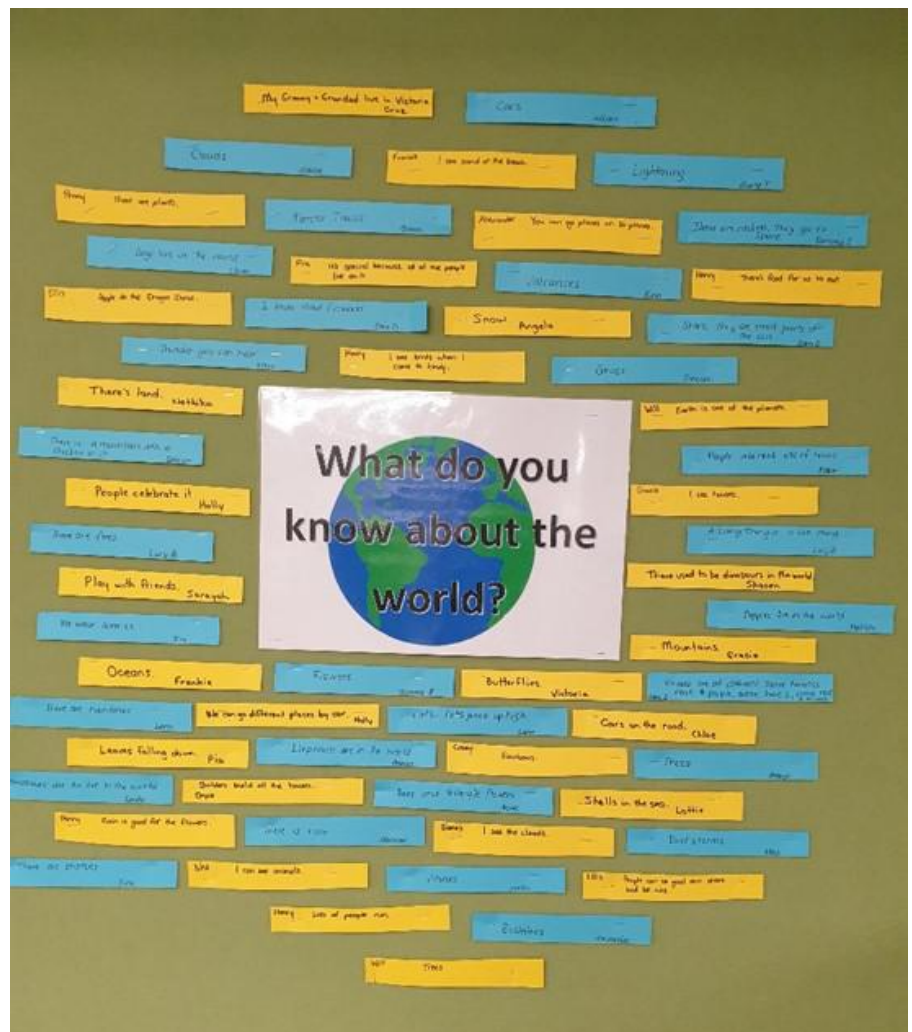
If you have any concerns or feel you need to share some information about your child, don't hesitate to speak with one of the staff.

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. I understand that it isn't easy to have these conversations at the moment. We are supporting children as they arrive each day and at the end of the day, children are very tired and are needing your attention / ready to leave.

Please feel free to email or call, to discuss your child's needs.

Alternatively, the opportunity will arise following the assessing, to have a conversation about your child and their progress.

Once back at our preschool, I think the communication processes will be easier.



Last week we commenced our focus of learning "My place in the world". We brainstormed our ideas "what do you know about the world". The children had many ideas and theories which are displayed on our walls.

Advanced Notice about Wheels Day

Wheels day will be held in week 8. (4 weeks times) and it is our only fundraiser for the year. I am giving you advanced notice as you will need to arrange to bring your child & their bike or scooter to Mitcham Primary School.

At the end of the morning, your child's bike / scooter will need to be collected as we wont have space to store all the bikes / scooters.

Dates are below, but further information, permission forms & sponsorship forms will be out soon.

Blue group—Tuesday March 16th

Gold group—Wednesday March 17th

It is a great event, much loved each year by the children and remembered long into the year. Children ride their bikes / scooters around the bike track at Mitcham Primary School, followed by snack and a special ceremony. We hope your child will be able to join us.

PLEASE NOTE: We will be able to have 1 adult per family join us for the morning.

Practicing for wheels day

Our very special and much loved Wheels Days will be held in week 8 at Mitcham Primary School bike track. Did you know that you can use the bike track on weekends or after school? The school is a public place. It is the perfect place to teach your child how to ride a bike / or move from a bike with trainer wheels to a 2 wheeler.

Over the next few weeks, you may wish to take your child to the school with their bike, to practice for wheels day, especially if they are not a confident rider. Each lap of the bike track is 0.5 of a kilometer. So for some children, it is a challenge to complete multiple laps.

Practicing beforehand, will help them to know the track and feel more confident on the day.

Diary Dates

Week 6

Tuesday March 2nd—Blue group family picnic

Wednesday March 3rd—Gold group family picnic

Week 7

Monday March 8th—public holiday

Week 8

Monday March 15th—Governing Council meeting

Tuesday March 16th—wheels day for blue group

Wednesday March 17th—wheels day for gold group

Week 10

Monday March 29th—Kindy at the creek

Friday April 2nd—Good Friday

Week 11—last week of term 1

Monday April 5th—Easter Monday

Tuesday April 6th—blue group celebration day

Wednesday April 7th—gold group celebration day

Thursday April 8th—Last day of term 1 for blue group

Friday April 9th—Last day of term 1 for gold group

Head Lice

Head lice is rampant at the moment. As a result, we will not be sharing hats. Having experienced head lice, I can guarantee it is something you do not want to deal with.

So if your child forgets their hat, we wont give them a spare one, as we don't want to risk the sharing of headlice!

As we all need to be outside at the same time, it will mean your child will be outside without a hat on.

So please send a broad rimmed hat everyday.

Administration of medication

Children who require medication must have a health care plan signed off by their doctor. Staff can not administer medication without a health care plan. For example, if your child has an allergy to foods / bee stings etc and requires treatment via epi pen or medication, we must have a health care plan. If your child has asthma (even mild doses) we must have a health care plan.

Also medication **MUST** be provided every day your child is at kindy, just in case we need to administer it. Some parents with children who have asthma or food allergies, have medication left at our site for the year. Other families prefer to bring their medication in on a daily basis. Whatever system is best for you, is fine, but just remembering we need to have the medication available every day your child is at kindy.

Where your child has an infection and requires antibiotics for short periods of time, we do not need a health care plan. However, we must have a letter signed by the doctor indicating the need for antibiotics, dosage and time of administering eg before lunch.

We **CANNOT** administer antibiotics without this information from the doctor. The label on the bottle is **NOT** sufficient information for staff to give your child their medication. With winter illnesses approaching (although hard to believe!!) please be aware of the requirements for staff in administering medication.

Staffing

As a director it is my responsibility to attend meetings throughout the year. At times through the year, staff may need to take leave due to illness or personal reasons.

Whenever possible, I will always ensure that we have continuity of relief staff....staff who work here on a casual basis.

This ensures that we can continue with our curriculum, the relief staff know the children, centre staff and daily routines well.

I have a partnership meeting on this Thursday February 18th & Tuesday February 23rd—Sara will be the relief teacher
I have a leaders day on Thursday March 18th.

When I am at meetings Maddie / Suzi takes on a leaders role. The centre is in good hands

RAN-EC training

Mitcham Primary have agreed for me to run a parent acquaintance night in term 1, as they do for school. The dates and times are TBC. However, this will allow me to share what is happening at preschool with our curriculum, literacy & numeracy etc and for parents to view our room and children's work.

As a result, I will not run a face to face session of RAN-EC in term 1. I have prioritised the acquaintance night, family picnics, wheels day and Governing Council meeting.

Therefore, for parents wanting to volunteer to attend excursions etc, the RAN-EC training can be done on line. I have information available on the online training. Please email me if you are interested.

Muffins / Pop corn

Families have been sending muffins and cakes for snacks & lunch. I realise that some families use healthy ingredients and make their own muffins. However there are plenty of shop bought muffins and it becomes too difficult to determine what are healthy / shop bought / sweet muffins.

Families have also been sending popcorn for snack / lunch. Whilst plain popcorn is fine, there are so many variety of popcorn that have sugar and salt toppings. And again, it is difficult to determine the plain / flavoured popcorn.

As a result, when developing & reviewing the nutrition policy, the staff and Governing Council, agreed to keep the nutrition policy manageable by not including muffins, cakes and popcorn.

We talk about those foods as being suitable for an after kindy snack.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to speak with me.

I realise that it is difficult with the fruit fly restrictions, but there are still plenty of foods to choose from for your child's lunch & snack box.

Thank you as always for your continued support.

It is always appreciated.

Chris, Maddie, Suzi,

Lyn, Robyn, Karen