

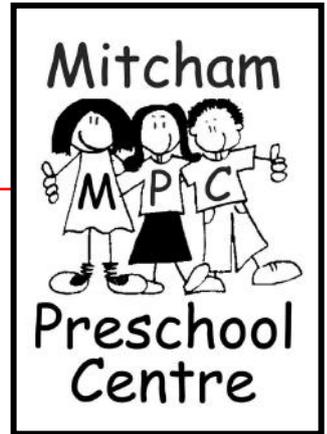


Mitcham Pre School Centre Newsletter

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Term 1
Newsletter 2

Starting preschool

What a fabulous start we had to the school year. 75 children commenced preschool, making it a very busy time for everyone. This year, parents / carers are unable to bring the children into the kindy due to COVID restrictions. However, the children have been so resilient and brave, coming in on their own. They settled really well when considering they have had 1 visit in October 2021, 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 couple of 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

Kindy tshirts and hats

We had overwhelming demand on kindy hats and tshirts. As a result we have run out of hats and size 4 tshirts.

They are on order and we will hopefully be here in another week or so.

I will let you know when the stock has arrived.

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Starting preschool continued

- 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 path out the front of kindy

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!! Last Thursday and Friday, the children received a gold medal for their bravery, resilience, courage and persistence. They were so proud to have a medal.

Over the next couple of weeks the children may continue to be very tired as they continue to adapt to their new environment. Often the "wheels can fall off" in weeks 3 and 4, as children become more tired. They may be more "clingy" than they had been in the first 2 weeks. They will eventually manage and adapt to full days and the many routines, with increased stamina and confidence.

This week at kindy

This week at kindy we will commence our learning focus for term 1

My place in the world, "cultures of the World Underpinned by Bookmaking"

We will commence with brainstorming their ideas in the large group time, to our inquiry question **"What do you know about the world?"**

It is a very broad question but it will be interesting to see what ideas the children come up with.

To support our focus, we will have inside

- Mark making table with Olympic rings and world maps to inspire children (fine motor / literacy)
- Numeracy table with number tracks, counting objects & frames (numeracy)
- Playdough with mini beasts (sensory / fine motor)
- Foam blocks and photos of world landmarks eg Eifel tower (problem solving)
- Caterpillar observational drawings (fine motor)
- Story table—Wombat Stew (literacy / language)
- Dome with pets (dramatic play)

- Home corner with dolls & cots (dramatic play)
- Palette—tree house & dolls (sense of identity)
- Palette—fruit patterning cards (numeracy)
- Challenge table—wooden challenge puzzle (problem solving)
- Small table—world culture items such as globe, atlas, flag book (understanding our world)

Outside there will be

- Box construction (problem solving)
- Small easels—blue / green paint and pictures of maps of the world (Creativity / observation skills)
- Number stamping (numeracy)
- Cutting table—making fans (fine motor)
- Platform with tee pee, books, pillows (literacy)
- Water trough with fish & nets (sensory)
- Creek play with dinosaurs (dramatic play)
- Jenga (problem solving)
- Hammock (sensory)
- Obstacle course on lawn (gross motor)
- Teacher hunt—teachers photos are hidden in the yard for children to find

- Teddy bears picnic (dramatic play)

Challenge tasks

- Teacher hunts
- Fine motor challenge (fan making)
- Mark making challenge—caterpillar drawings

Literacy

- Sound box games
- Identifying rhyme in stories
- Identifying our name cards
- Using our name cards to copy / write our name

Numeracy

- Number recognition
- Counting focus
- Recognising our shape groups

It's a busy week at kindy!

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

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, alfoil, 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 land fill.

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 into the preschool, you will be able to look through the folder with your 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.

Last week at preschool, the children drew a picture of themselves and wrote their name for their folder. This is their first piece of work in their folder. It is amazing to see just how much their skills develop over the year. Also in their folder, Maddie has put together a learning story of your child's transition into preschool.

We cant wait until you can come into preschool to look at your child's folder.

AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION WILL BE OUT SOON

Please keep the date free.

Monday February 28th,
At 7PM.

Bike parking

Children are wanting to ride their bikes / scooters to kindy.

For safety reasons, the bikes and scooters cannot be placed inside the kindy gates as it creates a trip hazard.

In the past families have chained their child's bike / scooter to the fence near the grassed area, where we are currently meeting. The bikes are safely stored there and are in vision of educators when we are outside.

However, the bikes & scooters are not the responsibility of the preschool. Happy riding!

Term 1 fees notice will be handed out this week.

Fees for term 1 are \$230.00 which includes fundraising & excursion levies) Fees are due for payment by

Friday February 25th

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.

BSB 105-084

Account no: 32323 1040

Account name—Mitcham
Preschool Centre

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.

We are in need of boxes of all shapes and sizes for the box construction. Children love making with boxes. It is an activity that develops children's

- problem solving skills (how will I put these boxes together / how will they stick),
- numeracy skills (what sizes will I need, how many boxes do I need, how long will it measure)
- Creative skills (what will I make with the boxes?)
- Social skills (sharing, turn taking, working cooperatively)

So please start collecting boxes for us as soon as possible. They can include cereal, biscuit, toothpaste, tea bag, packet mixes etc, etc. Please DO NOT send washing powder boxes, personal hygiene or medication boxes or milk containers. We can't use them.

Thank you. All our constructionists will love the boxes you bring in. You may get them back home again, in a creative masterpiece!



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 with me. (I know some families cannot attend on Mondays as their child attends a full day of child care)

Finally

I want to finish the newsletter by thanking everyone for their support and positive thoughts about the commencement of preschool, over the past 2 weeks. They have really been appreciated.

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,