



Newsletter Term 2 2017



Syndal Preschool

Director's Report

by Sally Whitrod

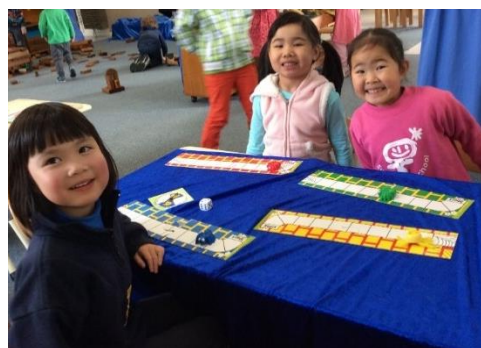
With another term almost over, it's a lovely time to reflect on the year so far. Dolphin and Echidna educators recently conducted parent – teacher discussions. It is so rewarding to share in each child's developmental journey and these organised discussions allow us to ensure we are working closely with families to provide the best possible education for each child. "Research over the past few decades has revealed how the human brain is biologically primed for learning from birth. The early childhood period of children's lives has a profound impact on their learning and development for the long term." (Victorian Early Years Development Framework, 2016)

Working together, we can help children during this critical phase of their lives, both ensuring their optimal development and also instilling a love of learning and discovery which will last a lifetime.

"Children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities..... identity is not fixed. It is shaped by experiences. When children have positive experiences they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging. Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity – 'who am I', 'how I belong' and 'what is my influence'."

(Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia)

Children's wellbeing is impacted by the positive social dynamics of having friends. As such, assisting children to develop positive relationships is a focus for all Syndal Preschool educators. As your child's first and most important educator, I thought I would share with you some tips for assisting your child in making nurturing friendships which I recently came across in an article titled, "Nurturing friendships in the early years" by Maggie Dent.



- Boys and girls approach friendships differently – boys tend to use verbal communication less, so need to spend more time 'face to face' doing physical 'stuff' E.g.; games

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with balls, sandpit play, climbing all stimulate dopamine, the brain chemical which makes boys feel engaged and interested

- Boys are often more fragile around friendships than girls – without a close, loyal friend they may struggle, display aggressive behavior towards peers and educators as they feel isolated and disconnected. Organized play dates can encourage special boy friendship
- Girls can be like butterflies, flitting around being friends with lots of different girls. As adults, be quietly supportive when dynamics change (best friends today, worst enemies tomorrow and back again) allowing girls to sort out their own dramas, encouraging empathy and exploring how others may feel
- Teach children about what kindness and fairness look like – through storytelling, modelling and having rules at home which encourage kind and fair behavior
- Having shared interests is the 'glue' which binds friendships no matter what the age. Endless hours of play teach children how to take turns,

share, how to win and lose with some degree of grace.

- Friendship conflicts are a part of normal life. Help your child learn self-regulation by teaching calming strategies such as taking deep breaths (once the big emotions have subsided!), having moments of silence and stillness in each day and using stories to show what good friends look like
- **Nothing builds positive affection and companionship in childhood than real play be it - imaginative, competitive, unstructured, organized, free-range or adventuresome. Focusing on how to navigate friendships will help children on their life's journey and make it a much more pleasurable one.**

Presidents Note

by Megan

We come to the end of the second term – the year is going very quickly at Syndal Preschool, especially given so much is happening.

Thank you to our Committee of Management and our educators for their outstanding efforts over this term. As you know, Syndal Pre School is a community kindergarten – we are a not-for-profit group and are run by the Committee of Management, who are volunteers, and our dedicated educators. This structure keeps fees affordable and ensures that parents have buy-in on key decisions about the Pre School. Every role a parent undertakes as a volunteer (collecting fees, managing our IT, applying for grants, running social events), reduces our administration costs and allows more funds to be allocated to upgrading equipment, supplies and capital works. We are very grateful for those parents who donate their time to the Committee of Management. If you would like to consider being involved in the Committee for 2018, a new committee will be elected at our AGM later this year. Please feel free to discuss with one of the educators or send me an email at president@syndalpreschool.org.au

Some recent activities by our Committee of Management include:

- Submitting a letter of objection to Monash City Council in relation to a potential change to our lease arrangement, which the Committee feel would negatively impact on our Preschool.
- Securing two grants – a Telstra grant for a new sunshade and a Landcare grant for additional plants.
- Continuing progression on our new shed and removal of the old shed.
- Examining capital improvements to increase security and safety and purchasing new equipment such as new trikes for the children to enjoy.
- Establishing our upcoming budget, setting 2018 fees and payment options.
- Setting dates for upcoming social events and new publicity measures.

Communication is a commitment between the parent community, the Committee of Management and our educators. Thank you to those who took our recent survey on session times and our enrolment procedures. Overwhelmingly, our enrolment procedures were considered to be good and the majority wish to keep the current timetable.

A reminder that from Term 3, we will be moving to use Flexibuzz rather than email so if you haven't downloaded and accessed this program yet, further information is available in the foyer.

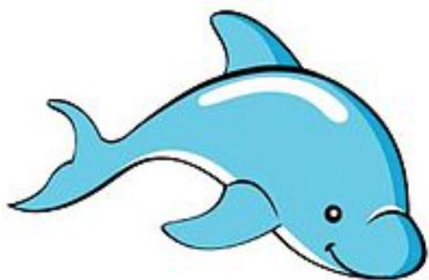
Have a lovely winter holiday break.

Megan Gidley

President –
president@syndalpreschool.org.au

Dolphin Corner

by Sally, Jennie, Donna & Karin



Term two has been filled with exploration, discovery and learning. We began the term with a focus on healthy eating, introducing the children to the terms 'everyday food' and 'sometimes food'. We drew and painted 'still life' pictures of fruit and engaged in a number of cooking experiences. There was much discussion, both as a group and between individual children, as we classified different types of food into either of the 'everyday' or 'sometimes' categories. These incidental discussions have continued throughout the term during snack times, further cementing the children's concept of healthy eating



An integral part of healthy eating and looking after our bodies is physical exercise. As such, we were pleased to host Citrus Dance, who visited twice this term. Once to share some dance experiences with the children and again to challenge the children's coordination and balance through the Brain Training activities.



This lead us into our own gross motor programme which we run every Wednesday. During 'Syndal Gym', the children are split into three groups and rotate between three gross motor based activities. These activities change each week and are based upon further developing each child's co-ordination, spatial awareness and overall gross motor skills. It has been very rewarding to see some children attempt the climbing challenges for the first time.

Using our bodies in diverse ways encouraged the children to look at their own bodies and skeletons.



Preparations for Mother's Day included making a special card and painting / decorating a treasure box. The celebrations culminated in Mother's Night held on Tuesday 9th May. Mother's night was well attended and enjoyed by all. The children enjoyed sharing 'their' kinder with Mum and participating in a number of special activities. We gave Mum the special gift and cards we had made. There was great excitement about being at kinder at night



There has been a great deal of cooperative play in the block corner – small groups of children have been working together to create quite elaborate constructions with the wooden unit blocks. There are many learning areas involved in this type of play including



- maths concepts as the children measure using their bodies to see how high their tower is, use pattern to create their constructions, investigate shape as they discuss each block and where it should go, visual discrimination as they place the blocks back on the shelf according to the correct picture.
- Language as the children explain their ideas to educators and each other
- Social development as they negotiate their ideas, develop emotional resilience when others wish to use the same blocks at the same time and begin to understand that the blocks are not 'theirs' Learning that it is okay if others wish to use them too.

Peter and his dog, Willow from the Responsible Pet Programme came to visit on Monday 29th May, to talk with the children about staying safe around dogs, how to care for your pets and what to do if you encounter an unrestrained dog when outside the home. He also explained the importance of asking permission before you pat someone else's dog



Wild Action visited on Monday 5th June. Rachel, from Wild Action, brought a number of unique Australian animals into kindergarten. The children participated in the discussion about each animal's individual characteristics, features and habitat. They especially enjoyed touching the animals and were amazed at the variety of textures.



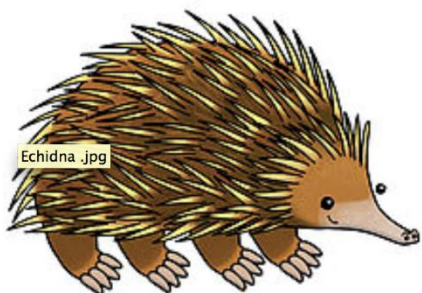
Thank-you to all the families who have assisted this term, in our parent participation programme. We greatly value your assistance, as it allows us to plan a wider variety of experiences for the children.

We hope you enjoy a relaxing holiday break and look forward to another great term.

The Dolphin Team

Echidna Spot

by Kirsty and the Echidna Team



Term 2 is moving quickly and it has been great to see the children developing their skills and confidence, learning to play cooperatively, developing their communication skills, and having the confidence to try many new experiences.

One of our interests this term has been about **looking after ourselves**. We have been learning about **healthy and sometimes foods**, and which foods we need to be eating more of and which foods less! *Thank you for sending healthy wholesome foods for snack and lunch times, and please remember not to send chocolate, sweets, and chips.*

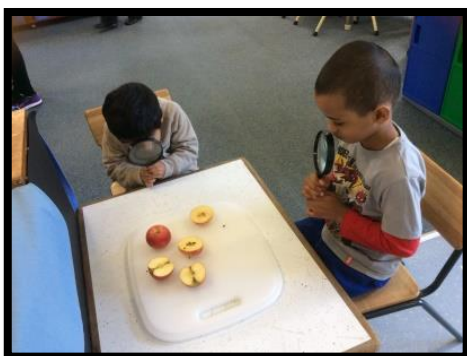


The children have also been learning about **the seasons**, and the changes we see in the trees and the weather during autumn, leading into winter. Our "All about Today" chart has led to a lot of discussion and learning about the months of the year, days of the week, what date it is and describing what the weather is like outside. We have even been talking about the UV index (the strength of the sun) as when the index is 3 or more, the children are required to wear hats outside! Outside play is very important for the children's learning and development, so even when the weather is cold we will still play outside.

Please continue to send your child with warm clothes (i.e. a jacket) and covered shoes they can run and climb in.

Another area of interest has been growth and the life cycle of a seed, focussing on apples.

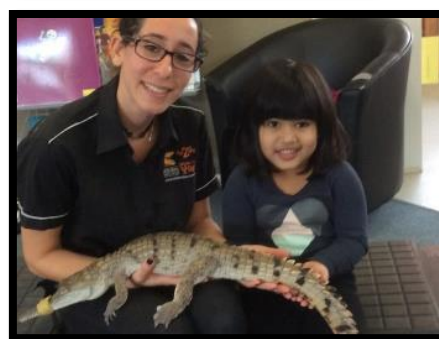
This term we have had two visits from **Citrus Dance**, a local Dance School. In the first visit the children participated in some "brain training" and the second visit they enjoyed a dance workshop. These workshops challenged the children's balance, gross motor and hand-eye co-ordination whilst activating both sides of the brain.



As part of the **"Responsible Pet Ownership Programme"** incursion, Peter and his dog Willow visited us at Kinder. Peter taught the children about how to stay safe around dogs, what do if they come across an angry dog, or indeed a happy looking dog they wish to pat! Reflecting on the learning during the following sessions, the children are showing an excellent understanding of these concepts and are now able to demonstrate what to do. To pat a dog, the child needs to ask the dog's owner first if it is OK for them to pat the dog, and if so, quietly show their "smelling" hand for the dog to sniff, and then pat the dog gently along its back.



Recently we had Rachel from **"Wild Action"** visit us with a range of Australian animals including, a Blue Tongue Lizard, goanna, Tawny Frog Mouth, Green Tree Frog, snake, koala and even a crocodile. The children enjoyed the opportunity to see and touch these Australian animals and to appreciate what makes them unique. Following on from this we have been learning about camouflage and nocturnal animals. We have also been making Australian flags which is leading onto looking at flags from all of our countries of origin.



Our other areas of interest have included our bodies and keeping ourselves healthy, the changing seasons, and farm animals.

As part of our **Social Skills** programme we have been continuing to talk about and practising how we can look after our friends and play safely. We are focussing on what we can do if someone is not playing safely, for example, we can say, "Please stop" using a big voice, we can share or swap a toy, we can move away and play somewhere else, or ask a teacher to help us. We encourage all children to have "lots of friends", and not "best friends" at Kinder (which can be excluding). We have also introduced some simple relaxation exercises including "finger breathing" and "pick the flower/blow out the candle" for times when we need to chill out and focus ourselves again. [Perhaps ask your child to show you!]

Another important part of our programme is **literacy**. The children's listening skills are developing well, as they listen to and respond to stories. With or without their name cards, all children are learning to write their names and are becoming more familiar with letters and sounds and how they work. As we read big books and picture books we are encouraging the children to join in as they can. Often we will write the children's voice (words) on their work and read it back to (or with) them, to help them learn the connection between speaking, writing and reading.

Our **parent/educator discussions** have been very worthwhile this term; this has been a great opportunity for us to exchange information about your child. It has allowed us to get to know them even better, and to better cater for their individual needs. We have developed individual **goals** for each child. Throughout each session we observe your children at work and play and use their interests, levels of development and challenges to help us plan for further learning and development.

Communication with families is important to us and we welcome any opportunity to connect with families, whether it is by phone, email or in person.

We would like to thank your ongoing involvement at Syndal Pre-School. A group of mums joined us with their child to celebrate **Mother's Day**, with an evening visit between 6 and 7 pm prior to Mother's Day. They participated in some activities, sang songs and danced and the children presented them with a special gift they had made.

Thank you to all the parents and grandparents who are helping on our parent participation roster and by taking washing home. We really appreciate your assistance and your children love having you here.

Please put your name down on the PPP roster for the end of this term and next term.

Term 2 finishes this Friday 30th June, and we would like to wish all our families a happy and safe holiday. Term 3 commences on Monday 17th July. As I am going away with my husband I will be taking Long Service Leave for three weeks over the end of this term and the first week of term 3. I know the children will be well cared for during this time.

Thank you and Kind Regards,

Kirsty and the Echidna team.



Lizard Lounge

by Carol and Donna



We welcomed 4 new children to the group at the start of the term. With some work, they have all settled into the program and new environment.

We had Citrus Dance, a local dance school come and offer a free Brain Train session and a Dance session. The Dance session was much more suitable to the 3 YO's and we all enjoyed stretching and moving to funky music!



Mother's Day gifts and cards were a lot of to make and distribute back in May.

The Photo Day on Friday 5 May went really smoothly and some lovely photos were a result of this day.

The Lizards held a Pyjama day on 2 June. Nearly everyone came in the pjs and got busy with some pyjama craft, singing and dancing.

Other activities inside have included threading with autumn leaves, floor puzzles, straw blowing painting, easel pasting and magnets.

Outside we have been practicing our balance and climbing skills, proving to be very competent in these areas.



At group time, we have learnt the song, "Fuzzy the clown" and "I had a little drum". Movement to music is still a popular activity and anything that involves numbers and counting.



We are very appreciative of all the parent helpers we have had this term. Please ensure you put your names down on the PPP roster for term 3 so that we can continue to offer a quality program for your children.

If anyone would like to speak privately to one of us, please contact us via email to make a time.

Carol and Donna

The Lizard Team

On Friday, 16 June, we had Caroline and Phillip come to perform their "Teddy Bear's Picnic" puppet show. It was so much fun! We laughed and laughed, especially at Phillip dressed up as Goldilocks! Some of us got to have a turn at dressing up or using the bear puppets. We will follow this up with some teddy bear's picnics set up on the mat, some puppets and the puppet theatre and some teddy bear threading and cutting and pasting.



Dolphin Group Representatives

On 7th June a few of us had breakfast at Trei Cafe. It was a great morning getting to know each other.

Thanks to all the parents who helped out this term. Your help is really appreciated by the staff and I am sure your child loved to have you around kinder during session time (mine does anyway).

Next term's parent participating roster is out now.

- Catherine



Lizard Group Representatives

It's good that most of the parents are actively participating in PPP. Thanks for those who are trying to fill in the roster when needed. It's nice to see few grandparents helping out too. This term's Morning tea was amazing to meet more parents, though it was a quick catch up. We are planning to meet outside, like a café from next term's morning tea. Hope we can catch up with more parents next term. Please feel free to message me if any of you have more ideas about morning tea.

- Lakshmi



Upcoming Social Activities

The social event for term three is The Family Night Out. Please keep a look out for further details.

- Zoe

Great news! Telstra Kids grant

We are delighted to announce our success in applying for a \$1,200 grant from Telstra. *Telstra Kids, the little things that can make a big difference to kids' lives, helping kids to play and learn.* Our Telstra Kids grant will be used for a new commercial shade sail, two supporting poles plus installation, as an extension to the sandpit shade sail over the water pump area.

Huge thanks to Gabby Wilson from Telstra, who is our Vice President, IT Maintenance Officer and parent of Blake in the Dolphin Group, for applying for the funding for us. We are very excited to share in the million dollars the Telstra Foundation provides each year to help kids across Australia to connect to their local communities.

Momentum Energy Junior Landcare Powerful Youth Projects Grants 2017

We are also pleased to announce that we have been successful in a \$1000 Junior Landcare Powerful Grant which is earmarked for new plantings at the rear of the preschool following the shed redevelopment. Thanks to Megan Gidley, our President and Grants Officer and parent of Thomas in the Dolphin Group for obtaining this grant.

What's on Melbourne for kids during the school holiday?

Melbourne Ice Slide at Eureka Skydeck



Slide into winter at Eureka Skydeck's coolest attraction

Last year, the Eureka Skydeck's first-ever giant ice slide attracted more than 11,000 families. This year, it's set to be bigger (and slipperier) than ever: think a four-metre high, 36-metre long slide divided into separate lanes and imported Canadian inflatable ice tubes. The whole thing takes three days to set up, using a misting system to keep the slide at -12 degrees.

The slide is open from 10am until late every day, and is open to all ages. While you're there, why not ascend to even greater heights? **Eureka Skydeck** is up on the 88th floor, and offers unparalleled views of the city. Sliders will be offered discounted entry, and a portion of the funds will go to Variety: The Children's Charity.

For More details, please visit

<https://www.eurekaskydeck.com.au/events/melbourne-ice-slide/>

Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery



Melbourne Museum's children's gallery space is a milestone for museum development

Melbourne Museum has expanded to include a gallery designed for very young children from babies to five-year-olds, setting a new standard in early childhood learning. After two years working alongside over 500 child 'consultants' and over 100 specialists from fields such as education, special needs, landscape design and playground creation, this space will be a cutting edge arena for learning through immersion. This is truly a space designed by and for children.

Walk in the shoes of a palaeontologist at the Dinosaur Dig or dance the morning away at the Camouflage Disco, complete with a mirror wall, light projections and unique soundscapes. There will also be a net climbing structure, Indigenous storytelling featuring the First Nations creation stories and murals from street artist David Booth (better known as Ghostpatrol). Tired tots can then rest their weary legs at the 'nothing nook' – a quiet space to recharge in between adventures.

To celebrate the launch of the Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery, Museums Victoria has also announced 'The Museum Generation' initiative, which will provide a free six-month Museums Victoria household membership to every Victoria child born, adopted, or fostered in 2017. The initiative, delivered in partnership with the Victoria Maternal and Child Health Service, will include free entry to Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks, IMAX, and the Immigration Museum.

For More details, please visit <https://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournemuseum>

Have a happy winter holiday everyone!

Warm up with a cup of hot chocolate!

