

# The Buzz



from Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre

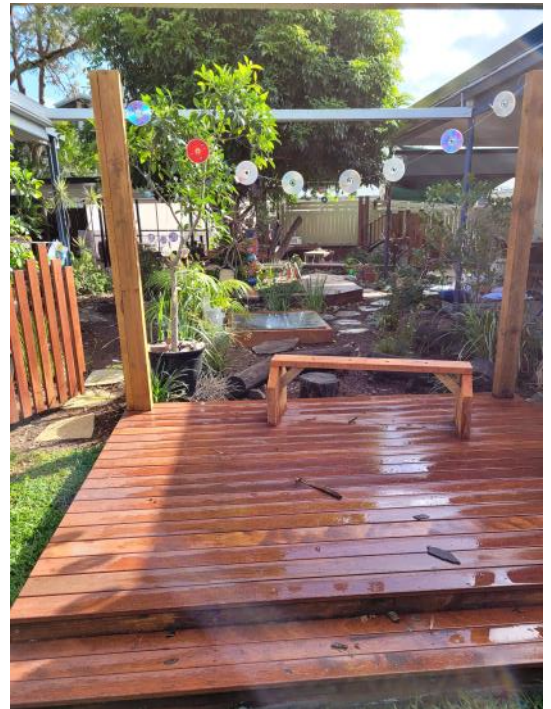
September 2021

## News from the Committee



From this

To this



Isn't the Wild Space gorgeous! Even though I had seen the photos, I loved being able to walk in and see it myself this week. It truly is an example of how well the MPC team work together to pull off a project. It required patience, problem solving, adaptability, making adjustments, being flexible, huge perseverance and in the end mucking in to complete the job. This is also after the collaborative phase with children and adults to make plans and design the space. Well done all team members, led by Kim with support from Chris who brought the dream to life.

The MPC staff team is also working on developing a RAP (Reconciliation Action Plan) to support the current practices of incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understandings. An extract is included in this newsletter and you can see the current statement on the office foyer wall and also on the website.

[MPC-Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Understandings-for-Web-Undated.pdf](#)

Happy Holidays everyone!

Emma-Kate Clyburn (President)

## News from the Director (Leanne Hunter)

It is around this time of year when thinking about next year starts to invade the minds of many parents, particularly those who are questioning their child's and the school's readiness for each other. Some parents have had discussions with their child's teacher to gain further insights to support their decision-making about whether their child is ready for school or needs more time. Parents also provide a wealth of knowledge from their experiences and we have a number of current parents who are willing to share their thoughts with others about their own decision-making process. Please see your child's teacher if you would like some contact details to talk with such helpful parents.

Many families are/will be looking for ways to support their child's transition to Prep. A number of staff members have gathered a range of information, tips and strategies from both their professional knowledge and as parents supporting their own children through the transition to Prep.

We've put this information together as a *Toolkit for Prep*, which in different times could have been shared with families at a Parent Information Evening. Being flexible in these changing times, Louise and I videoed a short session which we are hoping to put together along with a range of attachments to prompt thinking and provide useful tips and strategies. We touch on topics such as:

- Transition readiness;
- Skills, knowledge (including literacy and numeracy) and dispositions that are beneficial for children moving to Prep;
- Ways parents can help their child build these dispositions;
- What to expect for the first few weeks at Prep;
- Practical tips and strategies;
- Useful links.

More information soon!



Please also remember that all teachers are happy to discuss with you how your child is going at kindy and we can be great sounding boards for challenges you may be dealing with at home!

## Hand of Helpers

Your child will be bringing home some information about a HAND OF HELPERS PLAN. This is a tool to help you talk with your child about trusted adults they can talk to in confidence if they have a problem. Add names of people who make them feel safe and could help them if they have a problem both big and little. Having a hand of helpers is one effective way to build children's self-protective skills which is important for their

### PERSONAL SAFETY.

Young children need to know many rules for keeping safe (e.g. road safety, fire safety, water safety). Personal safety is another area where children need to know rules when dealing with people (talking, touching, feelings). It's never too early to sow the seeds of personal safety and children can begin learning about keeping themselves safe.

One of the principles of Personal Safety is *Nothing is so yucky that you can't tell someone about it*. Father's Day provides a very practical opportunity to talk about keeping secrets. Your child could keep a secret from Dad, who is likely to be one of the 'fingers', and still have four other adults on the Hand of Helpers to tell about any secret presents.

More information is listed on the HAND OF HELPERS sheet along with useful websites.





## MPC: ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER UNDERSTANDINGS



### What are the key understandings we would like children to gain?

Strengthen awareness and acceptance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: build respect. In line with MPC's inclusive practices, acknowledge that people may look different to each other and we all have hearts and minds with individual feelings and thoughts.

- Acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia and make connections to their history and Indigenous perspectives.
- Acknowledge past and present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and ways of living.
- Acknowledge that there are different aboriginal languages and cultures in different parts of Australia.
- Acknowledge the significance of the land to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their strong connection with sustainability. (E.G. Uluru is viewed as the great protector by some Aboriginal groups.)
- Acknowledge the significance of telling stories to share Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and languages. Sitting together around a fire or in a circle is a traditional way of gathering together and sharing stories.

We endeavour to afford opportunities for children to develop these understandings slowly, over time and in context. Intentional teaching decisions will be influenced by the dynamics of each group of children and families and how information can be shared in a meaningful way with children.

## News from Before & After Kindy Care

The numbers are growing! Having the additional time in our wonderful environment is clearly working for many families. In the past we have had some flexibility to take casual bookings right up to the last minute however



with our higher numbers it is necessary for parents to ring ahead if you would like your child to attend casually.

For **morning casual bookings**, if you have not added your child's name the prior afternoon or contacted your child's teacher prior to the end of your child's group day, please ring the **B&A phone 0490 014 946**, from 6.45am to confirm that there is an available space before arriving in the morning. Having prior notice helps us to ensure child/educator ratios to remain compliant with regulations.

If your child's attendance is becoming a regular pattern, please consider becoming a permanent booking for that time to ensure there is always a place. There is also a 25% discount with permanent bookings. Collect from the office or email for a *Permanent B&A Booking form*.





*Planting Phase- determining how deep to plant the seeds and finding a sunny position to optimize healthy growth.*

'Experiments', are a key focus with our 3 Day Children, and linking our findings to research about a topic of interest. Currently the children are working on finding out more about planting seeds and growing Beans and Sunflowers. With careful attention and monitoring we are hoping that our native bees will benefit from the flowers produced by these plants.



*Growing and Monitoring Phases- watering, measuring and noting changes such as the first shoot appearing and root and leaf .*



*Using some of our worm juice to fertilize the plants.*

## From Seed to Seedling- Our experiment.

We shared a great story about the Sunflower Life Cycle. This experiment has shown the children first hand, the phases described in the book- the seeds in the viewing jars developed a root system first, and shoots which have grown leaves and hopefully flower heads or beans will eventually develop.

The children view themselves as scientists in the process of investigation. Discussions form around:

- \* possible or probable outcomes;
- \* linking outcomes to our research- theorizing;
- \* altering growing conditions and analyzing results-too much water, not enough sunlight;
- \* monitoring changes-measuring height, variants in growth;
- \* drawing on prior knowledge and understandings and using that in context;
- \* learning new words- germination, shoots, pollination, fertilize, main root-root hairs.



Being flexible and adapting to change continue to be dispositions children (and adults) are drawing on regularly. For some children, particularly those who tend to be happy to go with the flow, being flexible and adjusting to change seems easy. Others, however, benefit from many opportunities and support to practise adjusting to changes. Flexibility is an element of **Executive Functioning Skills** which we believe are essential building blocks for children's learning.

When children, build their capacity to **think flexibly, remember, focus, self-regulate and make plans**, they will increase their ability to solve problems, make decisions, persist at tasks, recognise and correct mistakes, control impulsive behaviour as well as set goals and work towards them. **These skills will help them meet the challenges they will face at school and throughout their life. Children aren't born with these skills—they are born with the potential to develop them.** Our goal is to create self-regulated learners who:

- Use memory to recall goals, tasks, processes and recall prior knowledge;
- Use inhibitory control to stay focused on tasks and to collaborate successfully with others;
- Use flexible thinking to be creative, to generate new ideas, to problem solve and to respond to new situations in positive ways.

Opportunities abound in the dramatic play games children develop to practice executive function skills including:

- ⇒ remembering the ideas in the game from one day to the next
- ⇒ planning what they need and what to collect/make/build first
- ⇒ listening to others, sometimes shifting their thinking to follow someone else's idea enabling the play to continue.



Possibilities also abound in musical experiences, transitions, routines and everyday play such as:

- Guessing what the museum item, hiding under the material, could be. Waiting for all other children to have a guess too and accepting that their guess could be wrong. (inhibitory control/cognitive flexibility)
- Recalling what happened in stories. (memory)
- Playing movement songs which involve a pause such as *Galumph, Statue Game, Around and Stop, My Pigeon House*. (inhibitory control/self-regulation)
- Singing *Open Shut them* the opposite way with actions different to words. (cognitive flexibility)
- “*Baa baa white sheep*” – continue singing in your head when the sheep hides away. (inhibitory control)
- Using different musical instruments to denote different animals and moving as that animal as the sounds change. (memory, inhibitory control)
- Planning and saying which shape they will land on before jumping. (cognitive flexibility)
- Drawing plans before building/making/construction. (cognitive flexibility)
- Using regular symbols to denote play options and adding their photo next to where they're planning to play.
- Regulating their bodies by sitting still while waiting for a child to call their name to transition to outside play. (inhibitory control)
- Being flexible if something doesn't go to plan – investigating more about snakes, including seeing on the screen how they wiggle out of their skin, another day.



The possibilities are endless!

See useful links for further information to access Executive Functioning information.



MPC throughout the years has always encouraged the acknowledgement of our First Nations People through a variety of mediums and conversations. This continues to evolve and become even more evident as the Centre takes on the work of creating our **Reconciliation Action Plan**.

As educators, we are gathering our thoughts of how we show our respect and acknowledgement to the First Nations People that worked and played on this land through our daily practice. Some of these things are incidental learning moments others are chosen as planned teachable encounters. It doesn't matter how this learning looks; it is important that it is in some way embedded into our practice.

The nature of our day here at MPC and our environment offers many opportunities to engage the children in discussions of how the indigenous people may have used our land, what did this land provide for them and how was it special to them, how we can care for it and how is this land still important to them?

So how can you see this –

- Using our talking stick to pass around our circle, when sharing our thoughts;
- Drawing our number of the children for the day, not just numerically, but also using the symbols that have told stories on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders art for thousands of years;
- Reading and listening to stories of the Dreamtime, stories of how Indigenous people have used and are living on our land and their hopes of how it will be managed into the future;
- Looking at the artwork and that the symbols tell a story and learning to remember those to use in our own creative way of storytelling;
- Looking at the plants and animals in our local area. Learning to take what you need and leaving some for others or for another day. Discussions that the Indigenous people had a great sense of the need for regeneration of the land and how to manage this;
- Taking the time to listen to our Indigenous visitors and the stories they share;
- Looking at our Museum artifacts and collections. Currently we have items that relate to the Torres Strait Islanders, investigating these and looking at videos of traditional ceremonies wearing the Dhari head dress that is part of their flag;
- And so much more...

Creating awareness is the key to informing everyone of the past, working in the present and inspiring the future. So, taking the children on this journey with us in understanding our Indigenous culture is very important.





# The journey of the Cabbage!

Anna, Sue & Pam

Do you remember those boxes of seeds from the supermarket? It was inevitable to follow the popular culture when tiny hands cradled those boxes into Kindy. Our curiosity was ignited wondering what seeds would be inside. With so many donations of seed boxes, we decided to sew a few boxes and try our luck.

A group of children recorded the number of days it took for each type of seed to grow. The daily checking, watering and recording helped to share the journey with the beginning of the week children and we shared our observations of noticed changes. There were days when the seedlings were found saturated from overnight rain? Or wilted and dry with not enough water. Will they survive?

Over the course of a couple of weeks the seedlings were big enough to plant out in the Kindy garden. Flowers sprouted in pots, a couple of carrot survived the Easter break and the cabbage flourished.

On our return from the June/ July vacation we noticed the hearts of the cabbage were bigger. (The children found this hilarious! The term heart made us investigate what other vegetables have body part names?)

Now our attention was focused on what we could do once the cabbage was ready to pick. We could eat it raw, cook it, and make coleslaw or sauerkraut. We decided to go with the path not travelled by the children OR teachers and decided to make sauerkraut. We had to brave to try something new, just like the children.

After trying the raw cabbage and noticing how crunchy and sweet it tasted. The cabbage was then thinly sliced and placed in a bowl with pepper, caraway seeds and a lot of salt. After one day there wasn't much change to the cabbage but after one week we noticed the salt had drawn the liquid away from the cabbage, instead of a smooth opaque colour the cabbage was translucent. We also noticed the smell! Most interestingly when we all tried the sauerkraut there were many children in the group who enjoyed the taste and requested seconds.

Thanks Mrs. Helsdon for 'baby sitting' the sauerkraut on non-kindergarten days. Just like a baby, the cabbage brew required attention each day, including a clean wrapper on top and air bubbles removed.

The children have spooned the mixture into small jars (thanks to all who donated) as a gift for their families and fathers.

The journey of the cabbage seed to sauerkraut has provided wonderful opportunities in learning, over a long period of time, for all!







Last term the children had been planning what they wanted to see in our 'Wild Space' which was to be in the space between units 2 and 3. They had decided they wanted to see more flowers for the bees and butterflies; gardens for the lizards to hide in and for us to grow food; spaces to play games; a 'real stage'; a frog pond; and a fairy garden. We applied for and received funds through the Woolworths Junior Landcare Grant and Brisbane City Council Sustainability Fund. Over the last holiday period we created that space!

The children have loved exploring it this term and it seems hard to believe that it was only this week that parents have been able to come in, see it up close and walk through this space with their child. We believe it is really important for children to develop a connection with the land and wildlife in this space and in the wider world and are enjoying exploring this new area alongside the children.

We have had dinosaurs, fairies, birds, butterflies, jungle and insect games in this space. The stage has hosted bands, horse shows, ninja training, cupcake and popcorn shops. It is also a space for the children to explore and wonder about nature. We collect leaves that have fallen, notice new plants sprouting from where we planted seeds, water the plants to care for them, sit and listen to the sounds around us, watch and chase the lights from our stage lights as the sunlight reflects from them. We have even planted some 'surprise seeds' and unit 2 have planted 'magic beans'. We are watching and patiently waiting to see what will grow.

The children in unit 3 have been researching about frogs and what we need to set up our pond to encourage frogs to visit. They are really hoping that frogs visit but also know that the pond will also provide a safe space for other wildlife to visit, plants to grow and a calm space to enjoy. They are excited to see what creatures visit both above and below the water surface and are thinking that our resident magpie's, Maggie and Dave will like to have a cool drink and maybe a swim when it's hot. Stay tuned for the development of the frog pond as we plant out and set this up with the children.





Term 3 has challenged us in many ways and at kindy we have focused more on the learning opportunities that have arisen from a lockdown and quick gate drop offs and departures. The children have learnt to be more independent, resilient and flexible. We are seeing those changes in them every day at kindy.

As the year goes by, we begin to think more about how to best equip the children with the skills, strategies and dispositions they will need as they transition into their new groups in 2022, whether at MPC or elsewhere. The changes in our routine in term 3 have already increased their skill set at kindy and this seems like a perfect opportunity to continue this growth and learning at home.

All too often it is easier for us as adults to do everything for children simply because that's what we're used to or just because it's quicker. However, is that the most beneficial strategy for the children?


Jordy and I spend large chunks of our day simply observing the children and from this we have learnt so much about them and their personalities. We have been able to anticipate problems, step in to avoid potential conflict before it escalates or simply avoid a meltdown. Now, however, is the time for us to take a step back and encourage the children to begin to work out ways they can solve problems for themselves as well as improve their self-help skills.

Children can often be reluctant to ask an adult for help for a variety of reasons, yet some automatically approach an adult immediately before even thinking about what to try themselves. We have talked to the children about ways they could solve a problem and as a group have decided they could ask a friend or a teacher rather than simply allow their frustrations to take hold.

We are stepping up our expectations of them and intervening less often, allowing the children the time to work out what to do themselves. When we observe the children we can see those who are looking at us, waiting for us to ask if there is a problem. We are usually able to predict what the situation is but after talking to the children about this we are encouraging them to approach a friend or teacher for help as we want them to work out for themselves the best way of achieving the end result they need. For some this may be a little hard to understand – why step out of your comfort zone when you know the teacher will always help you?

You can do many things at home to help with this. Give your child some more responsibility such as a job chart for getting dressed, cleaning their teeth, packing away their toys or setting the table for dinner. Before you automatically go to do something for your child, stop and think if they could do it for themselves or if it is a new skill/task you could help them learn.

If your child always approaches you for help, encourage them to have a go first before you step in. Picking your battles is always a useful strategy but begin to think about not always giving your child what they want. Challenge them to cope when things don't go their way and watch their resilience grow!



**Griffith**  
UNIVERSITY  
Queensland Australia

**LAST CHANCE**

**Participants wanted!**

**Can we make starting school less worrying for children on the autism spectrum?**

**Who can take part?**

- ❖ Parents of children on the autism spectrum who start school in 2022 in South-East Queensland.
- ❖ Your child does not need an anxiety diagnosis to take part.

**What will happen and when?**

- ❖ We want to know if a 6-week parent group can help to children on the autism spectrum to begin school.
- ❖ Parent group sessions will be during October-November in Brisbane, Logan, Mount Gravatt, South Bank, Gold Coast, North Lakes area and possibly the Sunshine coast. Daytime or evening groups are available.
- ❖ The parent group sessions are run by an experienced qualified Clinical Psychologist (A/Prof Dawn Adams) and are free for parents.
- ❖ Participating parents receive gift cards to thank them for their time and reports of their children's assessment scores.

For more information email: [coolforschool@griffith.edu.au](mailto:coolforschool@griffith.edu.au)

This study has been reviewed by Griffith Human Research Ethics Committee; reference 2019/989

## HAVE YOU ADDED YOUR YOUNGER CHILDREN TO OUR WAITING LIST?

If not, please visit our website and submit an application form.

Enrolment places are offered in strict waiting list order so get in early!



# Useful Links!

Great native bee information can be accessed at:

<https://mrccc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Attract-Bees.pdf>

<https://wildpollinatorcount.com/>

Executive Functioning:

[A Guide to Executive Function - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#)

<http://www.self-regulationinyoungchildren.com/list-of-self-regulation-skills-that-are-developed-in-the-early-years.html>

[What is Executive Function? How Executive Functioning Skills Affect Early Development \(harvard.edu\)](#)

[CNN ExecutiveFunctionToolkit 2015.pdf \(childrenandnature.org\)](#)

[Executive Functioning \(in a nutshell\)..... – Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre \(mpc.net.au\)](#)

Understanding autism:



[Parenting autistic kids - Parental As Anything - ABC Radio](#)

[Parenting children with ADHD - Parental As Anything - ABC Radio](#)



[01 | Diagnosis - The Parenting Spectrum - ABC Radio](#)

[02 | Understanding your child - The Parenting Spectrum - ABC Radio](#)

Children's well-being:

<file:///C:/Users/lhunt/Downloads/Help-seeking%20in%20early%20childhood.pdf>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/health-daily-care/mental-health/children-s-mental-health>

What happens to our brain when we are anxious, heightened or overwhelmed? Understanding this helps us as adults to understand and accept what might be happening to our brains and bodies and be in a better position of awareness to enact some calming down strategies or challenge the self-talk.

Building this information with children when ready can also be another tool to help them accept and work out what to do next.

It could also be useful to discuss with other adults in your child's life what could be happening to them when their behaviour tells you they are not coping.

[mindfulness-and-the-brain-how-to-explain-it-to-children-infographic.jpg \(800x1399\) \(justbeing.life\)](#)















# Sustainability

We love our **native stingless bees** or as Tobias from the BCC Creek Neighbours Program calls them, 'tickle' bees. He gave the children new information as well as a new way to thank the bees for the fruit we eat. Why you may well ask! If the bee didn't sprinkle pollen dust on flowers on fruit trees and plants, the fruits wouldn't develop.

Thanks Yvonne (B&A Care educator) for compiling this useful information.

ANBG NATIVE BEE CHEAT SHEET—Peter Abbott (Native Bee SIG Coordinator)



<b>Lasioglossum species</b> (Chilactis subgenus)  Small/medium  Often plain grey body with white hair bands on abdomen  <b>No common name</b>		<b>Exoneura species</b>  Small  Usually yellow/reddish wedge-shaped abdomen  <b>Reed bees</b>	
<b>Lasioglossum species</b> (Parasphcodes subgenus)  Small/medium  Usually dark red abdomen  <b>Red bee</b>		<b>Hylaeus &amp; Meroglossa species</b>  Small/medium  Black with yellow/pale markings on face and/or thorax  <b>Masked bees</b>	
<b>Lipotriches species</b>  Medium Metallic abdomen with white/orange hair bands  <b>No common name</b>		<b>Megachile species</b>  Medium/large  Abdomen stripes; orange tail Pollen under abdomen  <b>Leafcutter and Resin bees</b>	
<b>Amegilla species</b>  Medium Abdomen with blue stripes  <b>Blue-banded bees</b>		<b>Trichocoletes species</b>  Medium  Hairy, abdomen with golden or silver bands  <b>Spring bee</b>	
<b>Euryglossa species</b>  Medium  Body black, sometimes iridescent  <b>No common name</b>		<b>Thyreus species</b>  Medium  Black with blue dotted pattern on abdomen  <b>Cuckoo bees</b>	
<b>Xylocopa species</b>  Large  Metallic green thorax and abdomen  <b>Carpenter bees</b>		<b>Euryglossina species</b>  Very small  Yellow/black body colouring  <b>Euryglossine bees</b>	