

# The Buzz



from Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre

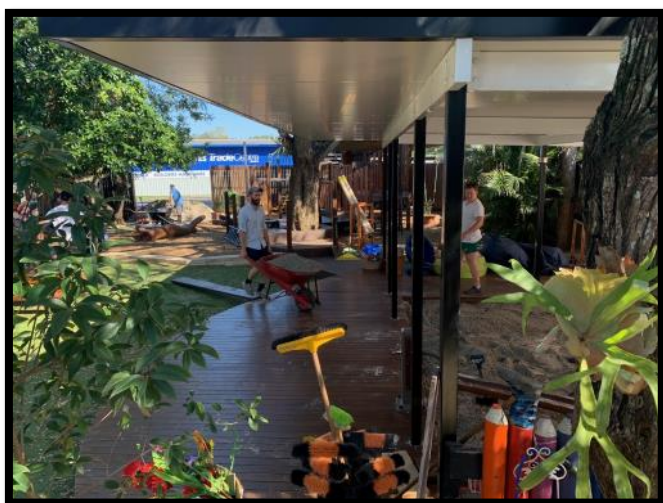
November 2021

## News from the Committee

Wow, what a term we have had so far. The kids have loved being back, building upon old experiences and experiencing new ones, as a large majority of them prepare themselves to start Prep next year. If you haven't already, I highly recommend watching the MPC Toolkit for Prep video. Please reach out if you need the email resent. It provides lots of helpful information, tools and tips for the transition to prep next year.

Have you seen Part 1 of the new central foyer... WOW, I cannot wait to see Part 2 finished!!!! Thank you, Chris Nicoll, for all the time and effort that went in over the school holidays to ensure Part 1 was completed in time for Term 3. Part 2 will be completed over the Christmas school holidays.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of many parents involved in working bees this year. This work has been crucial in caring for the facilities at MPC. In particular, I would like to thank, Celia Finter, who coordinates and runs these working bees. If you haven't already attended one, the last one is being held on Saturday 6th November. Please let Chris know in the office if you are keen to attend.



Thank you to all the families who purchased books for the kindy and for their own families at the book fair this year. It was very successful and has allowed the staff to purchase an additional \$561.00 worth of new books for the kindy, plus we had 40 books donated from parents. THANK YOU!

Lastly, I would like to thank the teachers of MPC. Thank you for caring and looking after our children. The contribution you have made to our children's learning will last a life time. The children could not have been in better hands. Well done!



Emma-Kate Clyburn (President)

At this time of the year, many people feel like they have their two feet in different places, one in this year and one in next year. It's hard to keep your balance and also remain focused in appreciating the moment. Strategies for managing stress are being put in place by many! It is a time for looking both ways for parents, children and teachers: reflecting on the year so far and looking forward to the next step.

Change is part of moving forward. Children have been experiencing a number of purposeful changes, such as having shared outdoor play where children can move freely between both playgrounds and joint morning teas. These shared morning teas will continue with children sitting in school/kindy groups enabling further connections with children from other groups who may be going to their school.

Many of the children going to Prep next year have been visiting their schools and sharing what they see, do and feel with others. Often they are excited and keen to move on to their next step.

Many parents are also thinking and talking about the next step, making preparations to support their children with what they need. This involves the physical preparation to gather uniforms, bags and the like as well as emotional support to continue to build the life skills of adjusting to change and resilience.

Teaching teams continue to work in partnership with families to support children in these all important life skills and have been particularly busy recently in preparing transition statements to support continuity in learning.

It seems way too early for whole year reflections, however I would like to take a moment to thank parents for sharing their children with us for this part of their educational journey. It's been fun getting to know you (parents) too! I wish you well on your next step.

## Thank you, Farewell and best wishes Sue Helsdon!



Sue is leaving us as a permanent employee at the end of the year. She has been a part of the MPC team for over 30 years and a valued Life Member. Sue has been an assistant and wonderful support for a number of teachers during that time working together to teach an enormous number of children.

Interacting with children has been a joy to Sue who has built wonderful relationships over the years with children, families and staff teams. We will miss you, Sue, however, it's not a forever good-bye as I'm sure we'll see you next year!



## New books in the parent library



A number of new books have been purchased! There is a range of books for parents to read or use as a prompt for discussions with their children.

There are a few about families - different make-ups; values; changing families and working together as a team. It's important for parents to read the books first so that different words more relevant to each family could be incorporated. The pictures themselves can prompt great discussions.

There's also a range about Feelings. *Why do I feel Happy? Embarrassed? Sad? Angry?* Once again the words or photos can prompt discussions for your context.

There are a number of books on more specific topics which can be useful in helping to address with children. E.G. *Worm loves Worm* which supports understandings about people who love each other marrying regardless of gender.

## News from Playgroup

Jo Ward

A huge welcome back to the Playgroup families who have been able to make it the first couple of sessions this term. It was such a long hiatus! It was amazing to see all their smiling faces and how much the children had grown. Some are beginning to recognise a familiar face from playing together last time or a resource or activity that they enjoyed. All these connections help children feel a little more safe and secure in this space. It has been fantastic to see connections growing amongst the parents too.

Aside from coming for a great play, a number of families are taking the opportunity to bring their child/ren to Saturday morning Playgroup another means to become a little more familiar with MPC before starting at kindy next year.

A couple of parent's comments:

*This is the perfect way to transition before starting kindy.*

*Thanks for giving my child a chance to practise sharing and asking for a turn.*

You are very welcome to join us for the last two dates: 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November.

## News from Before & After Kindy Care

Hayley and Pam

The 'wild space' continues to be a source of great joy particularly with a group of children who are loving having turns to 'hide the bird/shell'. They are learning that if you are tricky and stand in a different spot to the hiding place, it takes longer to find!

With time and familiarity, more children from different groups have had stronger involvement in interactions and negotiating play ideas and plans. This provides more opportunity to practise social skills involving listening to each other and being willing to compromise as well as feeling the consequences of their choices and adjusting when their suggestions don't sway decisions of others.

Helping with the big jobs, like moving rubbish bins, is a very responsible task.

These are all real life learnings for children!



Learning about science has been a key focus with the 3 Day Children this year. Science is incorporated into all aspects of our day at Kindy. Children are naturally inquisitive about the world around them, and may construct new information individually, in groups or alongside teachers. Working scientifically focuses on the development of the skills required to generate, understand and solve problems. Children create evidence through experimentation. They discuss and process information gathered, they evaluate their findings, and they build new theories based on the evidence.

Some of the wonderings the children have investigated include

- Properties of magnetic and non-magnetic materials. Children were using magnets in the digging patch and discovered some of the rocks hidden in the dirt were magnetic.
- What happens when volcanoes erupt? The 'Ground is Lava' game prompted thinking around what causes eruptions, what gasses and molten materials are made of, how eruptions impact the Earth and humans.
- The difference between whirlpools and tornados. Originally the children were confusing differences. We looked at YouTube videos and discovered that tornados occur on land and whirlpools result from tidal movements.
- Plant lifecycles. Our seedling experiments were closely monitored. We shared information about the steps in planting and growing sunflowers and dwarf beans plants, which now have produced flowers and baby beans.



- Learning about stingless native bees. Tobias from 'Bee Aware' split our Native Beehives and the children got to see the amazing colonies inside. They tasted the delicious honey, and learnt about life inside the hive.
- Bird watch audit. After noticing different species of birds at Kindy and the Bush Park, we conducted an audit to keep tally on the number and types of birds that live in our local community.
- Why materials float or sink? A water trough experiment that started as a child driven investigation.
- Chemical reactions. A planned experiment that showed how gas is emitted when chemicals are mixed.
- What is an insect? What is a spider? We took a closer look at the attributes of these animals and compared the differences.





- Who was Muttaborrasaurus? Prompted by Museum items, we researched the length, height and habits of this Australian Dinosaur.
- What is a reptile? We discussed new words—nocturnal, cold blooded, venomous and non-venomous.
- Fresh water invertebrates. A visit from Water Bug Wonders started us thinking about what animals might live in our local creek at Bush Park and what the water quality was like.
- Animals in our local area. Children noticed different nests, tree hollows and ground burrows at Kindy and Bush Park.
- The difference between the echidna, porcupine and hedgehog. There was confusion around what an echidna is.
- Marine life—What is a dugong? Children wondered what the Museum model was. Some theories included—It's not a dolphin, whale ore shark because there is no fin; seals have bigger eyes and a bigger tail.
- Weather events—What causes lightning, thunder, hail and rainbows?
- Frog lifecycles. Prompted by the construction of the frog pond in Unit 3.
- Butterfly watch—Common Crow and Citrus Swallowtails in our playground. The children have kept close watch on our citrus and fig trees where they discovered each life cycle phase of butterflies.
- Learning about worm farming and composting. The children know how to recycle their food scraps and change these into food for our gardens.



## Happy Diwali

Beginning-of-the-week children were thrilled that Diva and her mum Ekta told us a little about the Diwali Festival and showed us their beautiful clothes and a dance. The children loved it, joined in and thought it was so wonderful they invited children from the other groups to join us for an encore. Thanks very much Diva, Ekta and Mehul.



**Diwali**, the festival of lights is a very happy occasion, a little like Christmas, and the most awaited and the most celebrated festivals of India. People in every nook and cranny of the country welcome the festival with enthusiastic gestures. Families often get together and share special food and treats.



## Unintended Learning has Value! Leanne, Vanessa and Jo (Unit 1 2 day)

Teaching teams make plans for individual growth and group learning. This includes listening to the children's plans as we design a collaborative curriculum. We also make time for incidental learning opportunities as they arise: noticing the butterflies laying eggs on the lime tree, seeing how quickly a baby sister has grown over the year.

What I have been recently thinking about is the unintended learning that occurs. This is often influenced by the make-up of individual children and the group dynamics and is something that changes from year to year. Sometimes challenging moments afford opportunities for children to build their resilience and confidence to say what they think, accept different ways children respond to situations and express empathy. *'Still learning to...'* has been such a positive way for children to understand that children learn different things in different time frames. Celebrating together when someone has noticed another's learning has been a significant way for children to value each other and to feel a sense of belonging in this group.

Learning dispositions, resilience and looking for the positives continue to form the basis of curriculum decisions. This is particularly relevant as children are visiting schools and experiencing feelings of upcoming change. Most children are excited about their next step and it's a joy to hear them confidently share their experiences with others.

We talk sometimes about the feelings of being both a bit scared and a bit excited and sometimes having to be a bit brave. Often children say they're not scared. It's interesting to note that the physical response to both anxiety and excitement is very similar; racing heart, stomach butterflies, and sweaty palms. Sometimes re-framing and just saying aloud *I'm excited* is enough to switch the brain from being worried to the more positive state of excitement.



We had a new experience last week when the children in all 3 groups had the opportunity to play in either of the playgrounds. We talked about ways of welcoming visiting children to ours and what we could do in the other playground. There were many kind suggestions. Some children loved this opportunity while others found it challenging: having to share the space and connecting with new children, seeing other teachers they may not know and making more decisions about where to play. This was however a great opportunity to face problems and build resilience with the security of having close by, teachers and educators who can help.

We will continue to provide opportunities for children to build learning dispositions, contribute to the everyday curriculum, make use of incidental experiences and appreciate unintended learning right through until the last day of kindy!



Because children grow up, we think a child's purpose is to grow up. But a child's purpose is to be a child.

*Tom Stoppard*

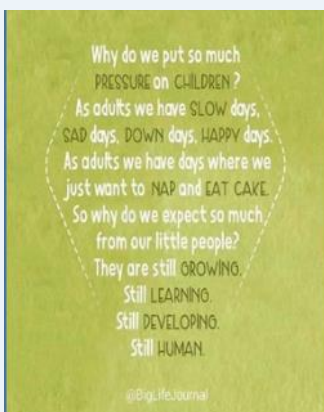
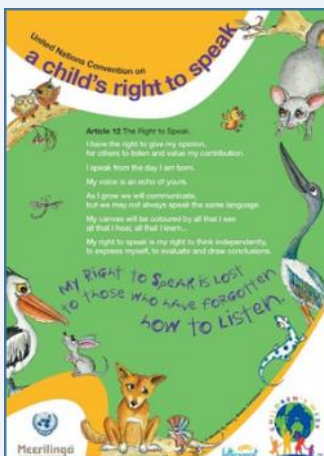
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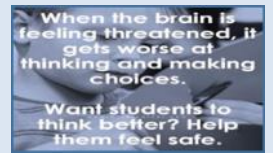
Beneath every behavior is a feeling. And beneath every feeling is a need. And when we meet that need rather than focus on the behavior, we begin to deal with the cause not the symptom.

— Ashleigh Warner  
Psychologist

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The last 2 years of our lives have certainly made us all stop and think about what is important to us, how does change affect us and how do we cope with uncertainty and challenges. Today, we continue to share concerns about adult wellbeing, but more importantly how our world needs to be mindful of the importance of the child's wellbeing. I wrote this article for the newsletter prior to COVID entering our thoughts and lives but reading it again now makes me want to challenge the thinking behind this even more. For many of us we have made changes, whether we wanted to or not. Choice has become something that has been influenced by the world around us, and not just our own personal circle. As our world starts to work out how we live with Covid and how we all start to get our lives back on track, personally and financially, addressing the way we look at our daily pursuits is always a good way to start. The following questions may help to give you a starting point when looking at the world we want to create for our children and ourselves and how best to help better wellbeing.



What message are we embedding in your child's hearts and minds about the society that we are living in and that they are growing up in? What is our (the adults) responsibility in changing how we manage our lives and listen to the needs of the children, your child? Why are we seeing so many anxious and stressed children?

If we all sat and looked at our day, from the moment the alarm or sun wakes us, to the time we flop into our beds at night, what exactly have we done in our day and what have we expected our children to do in their day that has become merged into ours...**TAKE THE TIME TO DO THIS IT IS AN INTERESTING EXERCISE!** How did this day look like? Was it calm and free flowing? At what point did you start the rush, raised heartbeats, accelerated breathing, louder voices and heavy sighs of frustration, the pushing along of both adults and children? **WRITE your thoughts down on paper.**

If you have taken the time to do this exercise, what is it telling you about your day and the parts of your child's day that you can have control over? Can you make changes to help keep some calm in your day and your child's?

In our Kindy days it can often seem busy and at these times we need to look at how it is structured so we can give the children or a child some time to take a breath and move to the next challenge as they feel ready, not as we want them to. Throughout our day if we are seeing a recurring behaviour, we look at what could be behind this, what is in the surroundings, who or how are children responding to each other, and then we look at how that effects the child's day and their sense of wellbeing in this environment. With all these parts we can try to work out how best to help the child. Sometimes the behaviour can be from the morning even before they walk through the kindy gates. The cause of this could also be the rushed start to the day, not feeling well, a bad night's sleep or something that could be playing on their mind from another day. When I am talking about behaviour, it is the stressed, teary, anxious, worried, quiet, silly, loud and angry behaviour a child expresses. Our job as educators is to consider all aspects of the child to help them learn and develop to their full potential in this environment and take this with them to the big outside world. Often it is good to look at the 'Circle of Security' a child has or hasn't a perspective of. They need to know that you are always there for them, they can ask for help, there are familiar routines and expectations, when changes occur they are informed and know how things will affect them and that they have a voice in what happens in their day. If you are seeing a behaviour in your child that is needy, angry, sad, anxious or worried take the time to look at the why this could be happening and is there a subtle change in the way you run your day to help them work through these emotions. Remember - The gift of time is precious to all!

I don't know about you, but I feel like we've turned around twice and finally see ourselves facing the end of the Kindy year. We've been on the COVID rollercoaster again, but this year as a community we have learnt how to roll with the flow. Listen to the advice and take action OR carry about our day a little more flexible and informed than yesterday.

Over the holidays, I participated in the Early Childhood Australia conference (online) and listened to a UK key note speaker named Kevin Collins. Kevin had done some research on the impact COVID has had on the children in the United Kingdom. While we are extremely lucky not to have experienced the severe impact on our children, it was interesting to hear that the core of his study found that what was most important for children, now more than ever, was building strong foundations.

Interestingly enough, these foundations are key to learning at MPC. Kevin found it was more important for children to develop learning habits rather than be taught content. He indicated kindy age children need to have the ability to listen and attend, to persist and build determination, to reflect on their own learning and have opportunities for social interaction and PLAY.

Over the past few weeks in unit 2, the children have been reflecting on their own learning or growth as they go about their kindy day.

Here are some reflections from the children:

"I used to need you for the fireman pole. Now I can do it all on my own."

"I hang on this bar here but now I can get all the way to the end."

"I am taller and can reach now."

"I can write a little 'e'."

"You don't have to push me anymore!"

"I was scared the first time I did this. I'm not scared now."

In preparation for the children's transition statements some children provided personal feedback about their learning at MPC.

What is something that you love doing at Kindy?

What is something that you are good at?

What do you think you may still need help with?

The theme of this year's ECA conference was the right to play learn and be heard.

With school visits looming and the anticipation of next year we've asked the children in unit 2 what they would really like to do or learn in their final weeks with us.

The children's ideas include playing outside for longer, incorporating more messy play, water days, more cooking experiences, carpentry, group and music games and wearing our PJ's to Kindy again!





Term 4 is a time to reflect upon and celebrate the gains and growth we have seen in the MPC 3's group over the course of the year. We began with a group of 3 year olds entering a new space with new adults and are ending with many 4 year olds who are full of resilience, confidence and independence with which to tackle new challenges in 2022.

This year we have learnt to:

- Unpack our own belongings each kindly morning and remember where to find them when we need them
- Follow routines and transitions
- Build confidence at talking to unfamiliar adults and children
- Negotiate with other children in shared play spaces
- Develop our confidence, coordination and strength on the outdoor equipment
- Listen to directions and follow through
- Use our ideas to develop games alone and with others
- Feel confident at singing in group games and music sessions
- Relax our bodies regularly with yoga and relaxation
- Cope with whatever Covid throws our way, particularly gate drop off and pick ups
- Understand that things don't always go the way we want but be confident in learning how to manage those times
- Trust in Hayley and Jordy and that they are there for us when we need them
- Ask others for help with the simplest of tasks such as helping with a puzzle or opening a yoghurt
- Being confident to share our ideas during a group discussion and understand it is ok to have a go and it doesn't matter if you are wrong
- Wait for a turn and be happy for others who are being chosen for a turn before you
- Make the most of our few remaining kindly days for 2021.

## Useful Links!

**Resilience** - short, easy to follow videos:

[InBrief: What Is Resilience? - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#)

[InBrief: The Science of Resilience - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#)

[InBrief: How Resilience Is Built - Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#)

**Self-regulation** is the difference between a two-year-old and a five-year-old who is more able to control their emotions.

[How Can We Help Kids With Emotional Self-Regulation? \(childmind.org\)](#)

[PowerPoint Presentation \(earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au\)](#)

[What every child needs for learning self-regulation - The Spoke – Early Childhood Australia's Blog](#)

[Articles - The Foundation Stage Forum \(FSF\) - Home of Early Years Foundation Stage \(eyfs.info\)](#)

[infosheet\\_The-Early-Years.pdf \(self-reg.ca\)](#)

[Why boys wrestle, play fight and fidget | First Five Years](#)

# Sustainability

## YELLOW FLOWER DILEMMA AND OPPORTUNITY!

The Tipuana tree drops its beautiful yellow flowers. This tree provides us with wonderful shade all year and is a home for many animals. However, the bees also love the flowers and there is potential for bees to be on the ground.

**We discussed the dilemma...**The bees need to do their job collecting nectar and pollen to make honey (which we love) but how can we safely play in the playground?

We've thought about:

- having a flower inspection each morning
- dressing up like a bee and frightening the bees away
- making bridges and walkways
- wearing shoes for safe climbing
- playing in unit 1 playground
- collecting the flowers which have been collected, examined, painted, measured, collaged and used for 'cooking'.



Considering where to play safely has been quite **restrictive for children however it is a great opportunity** for them to make accommodations for normal natural happenings!

## Thank you BCC Creek Neighbours

MPC has been involved with the BCC Creek Neighbours Program, starting as a pilot, for the last three years. It is now time for other early childhood settings to have an opportunity to access such a wonderful program. The staff team at MPC would like to sincerely thank the BCC team for creating and delivering such a worthwhile program to build children's knowledge and sustainable understandings about creeks, as well as animals and flora within and around.

The program consisted of four sessions:

Family Celebration;

Incursions with Toby splitting the native bee hive and Geckoes to feel and learn about some creek neighbour animals;

'Creek rangers' providing experiences as one of the Bush Park walks to the creek with children exploring animals from the creek, using grabbers to collect rubbish and taking part in a story about the impact of rubbish.



This program was aligned with our own strong focus on sustainability and as a staff team we have listened and learned new information and experiences which we will share with future MPC children.

