



News from the Committee

In the most significant shake up of kindy funding since 2008, the Queensland State Government has announced a package of funding subsidies available to families enrolled in eligible kindergarten programs from 2023. Whilst families currently enrolled may not directly benefit from this announcement, it is most welcome news to the MPC Community, and particularly heartening for all who believe in the value of well resourced, high quality kindergarten programs.

What does this mean for MPC in 2023?

MPC will continue to deliver its high quality, play based programs (for both kindergarten and - through our MPC3's program - eligible 3 year old children). Increased government funding means that MPC's ability to offer affordable kindergarten places, for children age-eligible for prep the following year, will increase, and (relevantly for parents), fees for attending the kindergarten program for children age-eligible for prep the following year, will be substantially reduced. This is great news for our community, our MPC family, and most importantly, the children in our community.

Where can I learn more?

The Department of Education has current information about the funding reforms available on its website (including a series of factsheets) at <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/fundingAndSupport/Pages/kindy-funding-reform-package.aspx#:~:text=From%202023%2C%20Queensland%20is%20introducing,in%20Queensland%20in%20a%20decade>

MPC will continue to update families about fee arrangements for 2023 as more information is released.



MPC is on Instagram ! Search for our handle at @mitcheltonpreschooling to keep up to date with our latest kindy happenings, and get up to the minute details of our park play dates, kindy events and community engagement.

Belinda Hapgood (MPC President)



As much as planning takes on a whole new perspective with the current health scenario, we are planning a couple of events.

- Parent Information Evening **Wednesday 24th August 7.00-8.00pm**. Linda Farrell, a speech pathologist, will discuss the importance of children's speech development, speech milestones, when to have children assessed and much more.
- Bush Park play McConaghy St. **Saturday 27th August 9.30-10.30am**. Children in some groups are just getting to know the joy of the Bush Park. This is an opportunity for families to come and play with children and many of the teaching teams. We love the Bush Park!

News from the Director (Leanne Hunter)

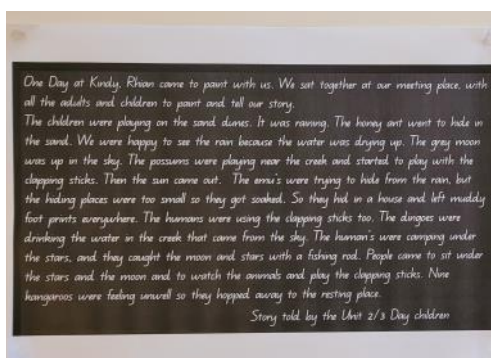
I've really enjoyed everyone's contribution to the newsletter this term and hope that you do too. You'll read about the great news of fee reduction for 2023 families as well as reading about the many ways the current children are growing and learning. Building life-long dispositions, skills and attitudes are exemplified in every article:

- the importance of children having a voice and ways children build confidence in speaking up,
- the benefits of nature play at the bush park,
- the grit, determination and perseverance in trying something challenging,
- listening to, co-operating and accepting different perspectives,
- planning and the power of YET,
- practising problem solving and executive functioning skills,
- every-day ways children are learning about sustainability,
- the joy (beginning week groups) and anticipated joy (end of week groups) in working with Rhian together to make their group story using aboriginal symbols.
- digital technology– what’s informs MPC’s thinking about it.

Our everyday decision-making in relation to the curriculum is underpinned by ethics, diversity and inclusion. A recent blog highlights ways we build anti-bias understandings, the importance of the language we use in responding to children and the resources we provide. The blog can be accessed at [Anti-bias: what does it mean in practice. – Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre \(mpc.net.au\)](https://mpc.net.au/anti-bias-what-does-it-mean-in-practice/)



Check out these beginning of the week canvases in each unit. We can't wait for the end-of-week children to have their turn to have such gorgeous relaxed conversations with Rhian who shares her own story and information about her family. Such a wonderful way to build some aboriginal understandings.



Ensuring children's voices are heard and valued is integral to children feeling a sense of belonging and agency at kindy. As stated in the UN rights of the child:

Article 12 *Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.*

When children actively contribute by sharing opinions, making choices, expressing their thoughts they are:

- Learning social skills, learning to negotiate and work collaboratively
- Developing language skills (oral, literacy)
- Gaining self-confidence: feeling that their ideas are valued
- Learning to question, request and share information
- Representing their ideas in a variety of ways
- Learning they have an impact on others and the world around them.

Children are given opportunities to have their voices heard and responded to in a multitude of ways.

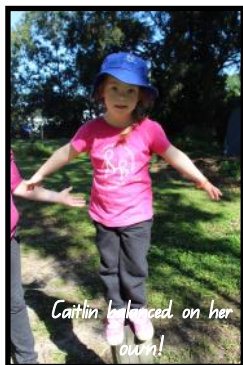
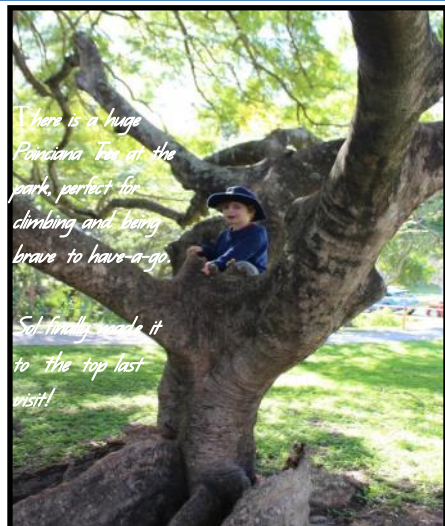
- Planning together - Each morning individual children are asked to share their ideas for games or projects in play and then can choose where they would like to play.
- Group Time - Sharing in Buzz groups and morning circle is a time to actively listen and learn about each other.
- Decision making - Giving children a say through voting on a myriad of everyday routines and games such as 'where could we have morning tea- on the deck or at the tables?
- Being responsive to their opinions and suggestions - Involving children in risk assessments of play equipment, '*how can we help each other stay safe when using the ninja line?*' Through co-constructing these ways to stay safe the children are more likely to follow these guidelines.

A new way children are making their voices heard in our room is through *helicopter stories*. Based on the work of Vivian Gussin Paley "*In its simplest form, Helicopter Stories lets children dictate their stories which are written down verbatim, exactly as they are told, by a teacher. The children then gather around a taped-out stage and the stories are acted out.*"

Here children are the authors and actors of their own imaginations. Through helicopter stories we have witnessed children who are quiet and reluctant to be in the spotlight join in and enthusiastically act out characters with their peers. The whole group is so attentive and engaged because the stories are created and performed by them. This is a safe space for children's voices to express themselves and be seen and heard.



Nature Play: what we are learning at Bush Park! Shirley, Jo and Pam (Unit 1 3 day group)



The group has embraced our visits to Bush Park, enjoying the time to play in a space that is free from manmade equipment and toys, and to be imaginative using found resources for play instead. There is an over-riding delight in the freedom to just run. And, although time spent in nature, on the surface may look like play without purpose, there are wonderful learning opportunities that are intrinsic to outdoor experiences in wild spaces.

When we arrive and help to set up Base Camp, we acknowledge and thank the Turrbul and Yuggera People as the Traditional owners of Bush Park. We take time to become mindful of the space around us, and remember to keep safe the creek, trees, plants, and animals there. We remember to keep ourselves and others safe.

The children make decisions about where they will play and how they could challenge their skills, while thinking about being brave with determination to succeed. The trees provide wonderful shade and climbing opportunities. Children are learning to assess their own risk and challenge themselves, whether tree climbing, balancing on the windy tree roots, or walking along the bouncy branches of the 'Secret Hide-out Tree'. They encourage and support others in their attempts. They find connections with different children.

There are spaces for children to sit quietly and ponder, to watch birds, insects and lizards go about their day, or to watch the sunlight hit the water in the creek, in the hope of seeing fish, turtles or eels swim by. They take very seriously the problem of rubbish and graffiti in and near the creek and problem solve ways to action change. The creek has given us opportunities to think about and discuss the quality of the water and the health and safety of the animals living there.

We have noticed animal homes in tree hollows, between tree branches, on leaves, in the tree bark and holes dug in the ground in hidden spots and imagined who could live there. We have made collections of sticks, leaves and seed pods and sorted by size and shape. We are unanimous in our connection with the space while developing positive dispositions towards experiencing and learning firsthand through nature.





At the start of this term, small changes were made in our Kindy environment to add some extra challenges or even just to catch the eye of some children who have been busy doing other things. Change is good, and it helps us all to refocus and raise the bar where we may be sitting comfortably. Change leads to growth in our thinking and gives us the opportunity to practice courage.

One of the areas was the addition of new magnetic tunnel blocks. Many of the children have spent many hours since the start of the year making hot wheels tracks (high, low, fast slow), magnetic ball runs outside on the shed wall and creating magnetic tower constructions both 2D and 3D. Eagle eyes spotted the 'new additions' from day one and there they have spent a lot of time now frustratingly trying to work out how to put the BEST EVER tunnel together that could also stand the test of time and over use. With anything new the trials of learning how to make the pieces connect and stay connected has been a constant source of frustration, along with working out how to add strength to the height of the structure so the balls can move through easily and not get stuck, roll backwards or just having the entire thing crash when someone lets go!

We have given the children time to work on this, alone, together, and then offering help either when they have asked or when just seemed that it was all too much. Grit, determination, and perseverance can only take you so far if you constantly hit that brick wall and you cannot see a way of overcoming the problem. It is always interesting sitting with the children in these situations and watching the ones who are going to keep on going, regardless of our presence, and those who just hand the pieces to us to make the design that they have in their heads and need to tell us how they want it to look, or those that just sit back and wait for it all to miraculously happen. Guiding the discussions and talking about the plans aloud certainly helps some, while teaching how to connect the pieces and how to add strength benefits others. There have been a few occasions where individuals who have been working on solo projects will bring their connected pieces together to the whole group project and then things can be interesting. Watching and listening to the instructions they give each other, or handle when given advice by their peers is also an exercise in grit, determination, and perseverance. Making sure your voice is not lost, in the many, takes courage and grit, determination and perseverance!

The most important part of this exercise is to help children manage their feelings. Encouragement and guidance along with allowing freedom to explore and not just to jump in a solve the problem. Teaching to try, retry, listen, celebrating the small wins to keep up the endurance to see the light at the end of the tunnel. When all these things fall into place we see growth, and the sense of achievement that these little people love to see as well! Teaching these lifelong skills well, in these formative years is vital to personal growth and wellbeing into the future.



"Children of different ages think very differently about friendship. As they mature, they become better able to understand another person's perspective, which adds depth and meaning to their friendships". Robert Selman

Most children at Kindy view friends as momentary playmates, and their friendships are all about having fun together. Sometimes their friends are children who are conveniently nearby, who are interested in the same activity or like the same things they do.

At this time in the Kindy year, definite patterns can be observed in children's preferences for some peers over others. They assume that other children think the same way they do, so they tend to get very upset when they find out that a playmate has a different opinion. It can sometimes be tricky to navigate another child's perspective!

The group has participated in various games to promote shared enjoyment, co-operation, team building, connecting, learning, caring, and relating to others. To build exposure to various children in our group. It's surprising when children find out new information about a peer. The aim for the group is to help each individual feel comfortable in their own skin while appreciating that not everyone looks, talks, or thinks like them. And that's ok! Anyone, in our group is someone who you can play with.



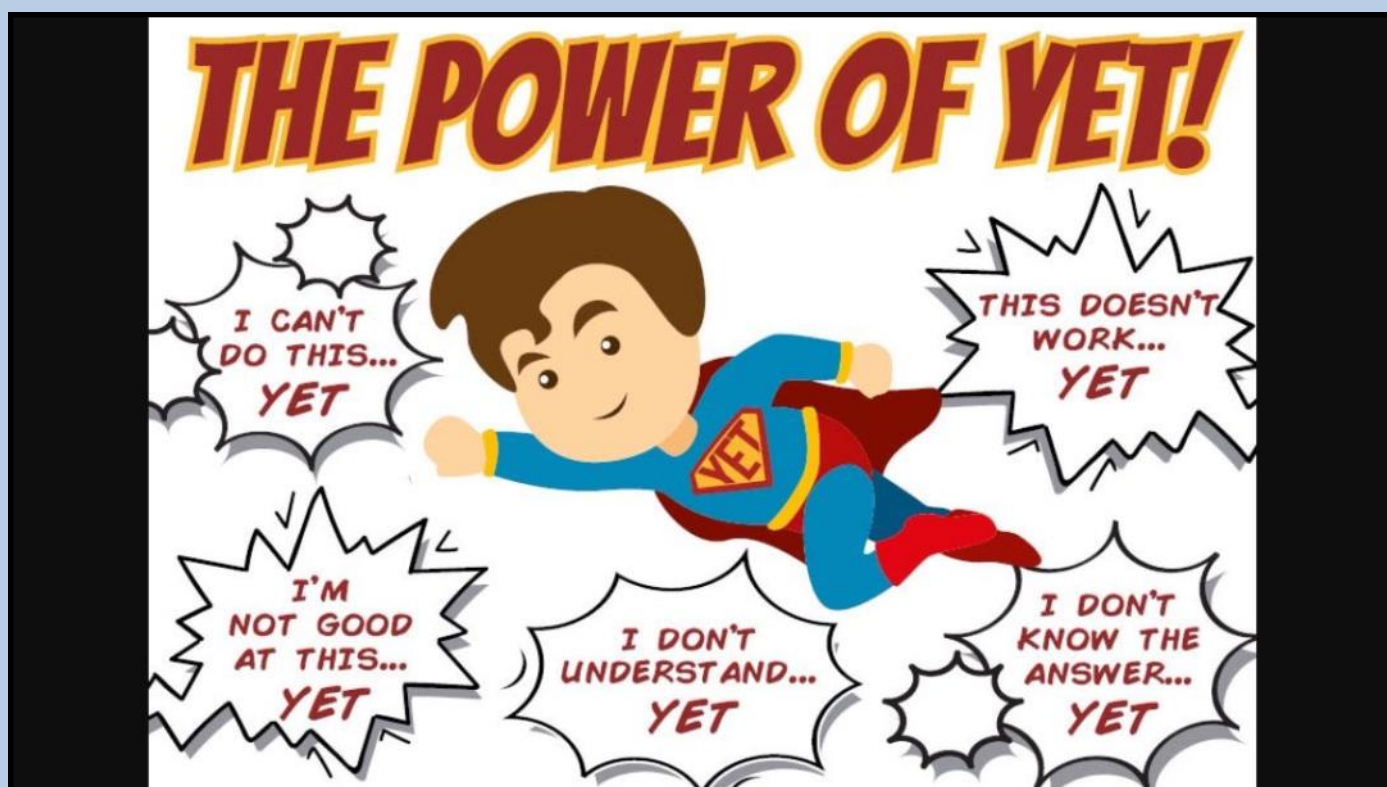
At MPC we build children's capacity as collaborative social learners by encouraging them to share ideas, listen to others, engage in communication and represent their feelings, understandings and ideas in a variety of ways.

The children always have lots to share with each other and us at meal times. One week recently, some children had shared stories about what they had seen on the tv show Ninja Warrior and I responded with, "I wonder if we could build a ninja course at kindy?"

Many **BIG** ideas were brought up! – it has to be really hard; we need a pool; we will need to build a really high tower; maybe we can bring our swimmers to kindy to swim under the water. Of course, we couldn't do all these ideas as they had seen on tv, but we discussed their ideas and thought about what we could do at kindy. We put the Big Book out on the listening mat and invited the children to draw and tell us about their ideas that afternoon. From those drawings, we planned our first ninja course a couple of weeks ago.

With a few children each Wednesday, we have encouraged them to draw their ideas in the book and then together we plan how we can make those ideas happen. We use photos of outdoor equipment we have at kindy to help with the planning and consider what else we can use or make. The same way we plan what we need for inside games. When we needed to have a pool under the horizontal ladder, the children thought about what else they could use as water and decided to add the blue mat underneath to be the water. The children had to go along the underneath of the ladder, without falling into the water. As added incentive, some children decided to draw and cut out sharks, which we laminated and added to the blue water.

The children have enjoyed being involved in this process. We have the names of the children who have planned the weeks Ninja Course displayed on our whiteboard at the listening mat and before we go outside on Monday mornings, we have a look at what challenges we will attempt when we go outside. For some children it is really exciting to try these tricky challenges and they will go back to the course time after time, intent on successfully completing the challenges and celebrating their success. For other children, it is a great opportunity to practice being brave, persistent and having a go at something new or hard. They may not be able to do it all YET, but we talk about the importance of having a go, building our muscles, and celebrating the little successes, of getting a bit further each time, being persistent, not giving up, being brave, and knowing that we might not be able to do it yet, but we are all learning together.



As we move into the second part of the year, 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 2023, whether at MPC or elsewhere, through everyday routines at kindy. We are choosing where they sit on the mat in the morning though the use of name cards which also help for name recognition and awareness. We are expanding their Executive Function skills, particularly in the areas of working memory and flexibility. We are taking them outside their comfort zone and asking just a little bit more than we did earlier in the year.

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. But is that the most beneficial strategy for the children?

Jordy and I spend large chunks of our day observing the children and from this we have learnt so much about them and their personalities. We can anticipate problems and step in to avoid potential conflict before it escalates or simply to avoid a meltdown. Now we begin 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. We have talked about ways they could solve a problem and 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 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.

You could also do some things at home to help. Give your child 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 them, 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 and challenge them to cope when things don't go their way.

Have you seen the central noticeboard for information about Executive Functioning?



For your information...

Currently involved in this study, is one of our MPC families, who have said that not only is it benefiting their own children, the study will benefit future families.

HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH LANGUAGE DELAYS



FAMILIES WILL RECEIVE A \$20 GIFT VOUCHER FOR THEIR TIME

Families will be invited to visit The University of Queensland's Early Cognitive Development Centre, Brisbane. Siblings will engage in a range of fun activities and receive a gift for their participation.

We are seeking families that include the following:

- One child aged 2.5 - 8-years-old with language delays
- One child aged 2.5 - 8-years-old without language delays

To participate, scan the QR code, where you'll find further information and a consent form or contact Charlotte Casey (charlotte.casey@uq.edu.au).



HELP US UNDERSTAND FAMILIES WHO HAVE A CHILD WITH AUTISM



FAMILIES WILL RECEIVE A \$100 GIFT VOUCHER FOR THEIR TIME

Families will be invited to visit The University of Queensland twice and consent to one home visit within a year. Siblings will engage in a range of fun activities. Families will also receive video footage of their children's playtime.

We are seeking families that include the following:

- One child aged 2.5 - 8-years-old with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- One child aged 2.5 - 8-years-old without Autism Spectrum Disorder

To register your interest or find out more, please scan the QR code, or contact us at siblingsstudy@uq.edu.au





UQ ethics approval number: 2019001955



Useful links!

[Home](#) | [Parenting](#) | [First Five Years](#)

Firstfiveyears.org.au is a social purpose venture aimed at educating parents on the value of early learning and providing parents with the knowledge that supports the wellbeing and development of their children. First Five Years wants to empower parents in a positive, real-world and non-judgemental way.

<https://www.happyfamilies.com.au/articles/what-to-do-when-kids-wont-listen>

So what do we do when our kids "won't listen" and it actually does matter? Justin Coulson provides some tips!

[https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/campaign/multicultural-queensland-month/webinars?](https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/campaign/multicultural-queensland-month/webinars?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=paid+social&utm_campaign=Traffic&fbclid=IwAR2KruqOaW_Km8zz-Q7HxOaisZnK3jNAj2AsiBTYejL4ToqYsslqhk4XQFM)

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August is Multicultural Queensland month and there are a number of free webinars providing practical information, hints and tips about a range of topics including the importance of using inclusive language, and the benefits of speaking more than one language.

[Teaching Your Child to Be Ethical | Education.com](#)

This article and those below, provides information and provocations for parents thinking and addresses some challenging questions. What and how do parents teach their children about ethics? What character attributes are important?

[Who, Me? Biased? - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

[8 Resources for Teaching About Unconscious Bias - Institute for Humane Education](#)

[Story time: Looking Like Me - Kids Books Read Aloud - Bing video](#)

["The first TikTok war" - why ECEC educators need to be aware of children's media \(thesector.com.au\)](#)

Children of all ages are being exposed to disturbing content through digital devices, and while disturbing content in the media is nothing new, the frequency and ease with which children and young people can access disturbing content is unprecedented.

Playgroup



Playgroup in the sunshine on these wintry mornings has been just delightful. It's been a great opportunity for children to explore and try new things. The last few weeks have been a mix of families who have played here many times and new families just getting to know us and see what's outside as well as inside the playground.



Zoe brought her grandmother one morning to show her all around kindy and play together.

One parent, who is new to this area, mentioned she loved coming as it gave her a way to meet other families.

There's always great things to discover and do. Jo is very happy to welcome you.



Thank you parents for your understanding when we had had to change dates or cancel. Playgroup dates for the rest of this term are 6th and 13th August and 10th Sept. On the 27th August, Playgroup families are very welcome to join Jo and other kindy families at the 'Bush Park' in McConaghy Street 9.30-10.30.

News from Before & After Kindy Care

The children are continuing to practise building confidence, independence and resilience as they adjust and help educators who are relieving for the usual team members away sick. A very big thank you to the teachers and educators who are working long hours and stepping in to cover others. What a team!

Different connections continue to grow as children play with children they only see at Before and/or After Kindy Care and sometimes the play started in the morning continues in the afternoon.

Mabel and Harriet built a great fire to warm up at before care with the addition of cooking marshmallows!

Small world play, in this case with construction vehicles, provides a significant place for sharing ideas and working together.

When the weather has permitted, outdoor play opportunities continue to be the play of choice.



Sustainability

Sustaining ourselves is a part of the broader understandings of sustainability. *Good health and Well-being* is in fact number three in UNESCO's key sustainable development goals. 'Ourselves' includes everyone; children, parents, teachers and educators as well as anyone in your child's village of people who love them.

In my extensive years of teaching, I don't think I have ever felt more strongly about the importance of health and well-being for all. Play for children, remains the most significant well-being tool and means to sustain themselves, particularly play outside in nature.



Incorporating sustainable teaching is also a part of how we embed sustainability as a part of our curriculum. Some children are actively engaged in experiments with composting to reinforce understandings about why children sort their rubbish. Will the apple core, banana skin, plastic yoghurt container and paper de-compose? How long will it take? Having long-term projects also promote the reality of acting now for long-term gains; so pivotal to sustainable concepts.

All the children in 1/3 had an opportunity to hold a worm while having further discussions about the important job the worms do in the worm farm. Some were joyous, others were very hesitant and some were brave enough to try after seeing so many of their classmates having-a-go.

Zoe's mum let Shirley know that *Zoe has been saying that your worm compost day was the best day of her life! She's shared some great worm facts over dinner and is planning on spending up big at the worm wee shop.* What a wonderful dinner time chat!



What do you think?

Risk is Essential

"We are a nation of pushy helicopter parents," writes Kate Blincoe in an article in The Guardian, "project managing a schedule of activities and waiting below our children on the monkey bars in case they should slip. It's no wonder that the simulated risk of computer games is so compelling and addictive – the real world seems tame in comparison. Yet humans are designed to experience a degree of fear – manage it out of their lives and they will seek it elsewhere, on the internet, or with self-destructive behaviour.

So how can we put some of that danger and excitement back into the lives of our cosseted children? The answer is step-by-step and in an age-appropriate way. First, the outdoors is key. Outdoors time every day is essential... Encourage the toddler to poke around under hedges and permit your primary-age children to leave your sight. Unsupervised time...might lead to more cuts and scrapes, or fights between siblings, but it is what many of us did as children, and it teaches them how to make risk-related decisions for themselves. Risk perception is like a muscle that needs to be developed and flexed."

Blincoe reports that "roaming distance" (how far children play from home), has decreased by 90% in the past 30 years."

(accessed at Exchange Everyday <https://www.childcareexchange.com/eed/issue/4876/>)

Have you seen... MPC Digital Technology statement?

Who is the Statement for?

A Statement on technology and young children provides a framework and reflection tool for teachers, educators, children, families and committee members to inform decisions and understand technology use with and for young children.

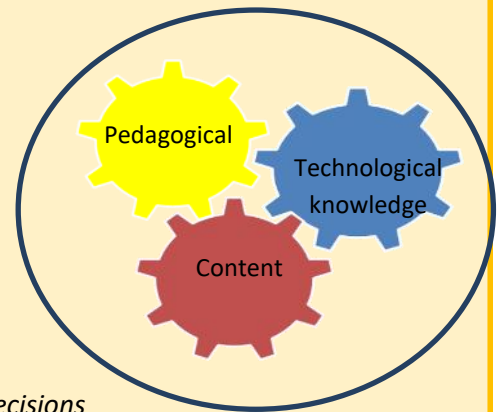
Why develop a technology statement?

Changing technologies and the rate of change are ever increasing. Intentional decisions about each technology and the benefits, challenges and risks need to be made in context of place (MPC) and time. As Chip Donoghue, a world renowned early childhood and technology researcher, responds when asked about screen time for young children, *"It depends"*. This technology statement is in response to the complex and ever-changing nature of technology and aims to be a tool to support decision-making when considering the needs of individual children, the community of children, families and educators. This statement, aligned with MPC philosophy and policies and the Early Years Learning Framework, is a 'living document' which can be reviewed and changed as information, improved practices and deeper understandings emerge.

What frames this statement?

Technology and media use must be grounded in pedagogical principles. With guidance, these various technology tools can be harnessed for learning and development; without guidance, usage can be inappropriate and/or interfere with learning and development. Child development, Brain, Learning and Play theories, based on scientific research, are paramount when making decisions about technology use. All screens are not considered equal.

Technology is just like any "tool" we use in learning. It is not inherently good, nor inherently bad. It is something that educators must consider and make reasoned decisions about. Kate Highfield ECA LiveWire Forum 2021



Questions to influence decision making?

Is the technology/ interactive media used:-

- to support learning and to expand young children's access to new content?
- intentionally, within the framework of developmentally appropriate practice, to support learning goals established for individual children/community of children?
- to strengthen relationships (adult/child; child/child)?
- age appropriate, individually appropriate, and culturally and linguistically appropriate?
- to integrate into the environment, curriculum, and daily routines?
- supportive of existing classroom developmental and educational goals rather than distorting or replacing them?
- passive and non-interactive? if so, does this support individual/group learning goals?
- socially isolating? if so, does this support individual/group learning goals?
- impacting on outdoor play or reducing physical activity?
- contributing to or detracting from appropriate behaviour and attention?
- enabling thinking: research, revisit, revise, plan, communicate, represent, create?
- ethically sound?

The full statement, including references and links, can be accessed at: [Technology-Statement-2021.pdf \(mpc.net.au\)](https://mpc.net.au/Technology-Statement-2021.pdf)