



from Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre

Term 1, 2024

## News from the Committee— Clair Perkins (President)

Hello and on behalf of the Management Committee and teachers, a very warm welcome to MPC for 2024! It's been lovely to start the new year seeing many new and returning families enjoying the rooms, playgrounds and the communal foyer and garden areas. Everyone is enjoying the benefits of the shady environment and water play during this hot start to the year.

A big thank you to the working bee members who worked hard before Term 1 started to get the grounds looking fabulous.

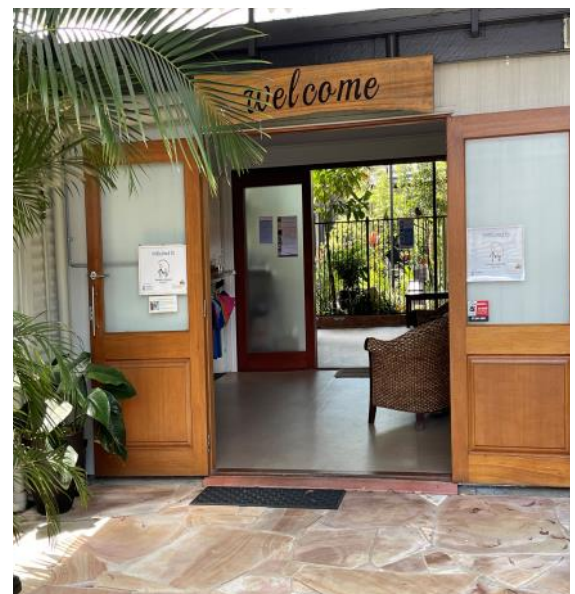
We are somehow already in week 7 of the term. It's amazing to see how far the children have come with their routines, making new friends and the creative play ideas and plans they are coming up with together. Of course, some will take some more time to adjust to the new environment and routines, and the MPC teachers are wonderful at supporting families through this time. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any of the Committee for a chat or support if needed.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have joined the Management Committee this year, we have a fabulous and enthusiastic bunch of parents who bring lots of ideas and experience to help MPC run smoothly.

While MPC's motto is "Making Childhood Memories", social connections for the whole family including the grownups are also important! It was lovely to see so many families join their children at kindy for relaxed afternoon exploring the play spaces.

Keep an eye out for the program of upcoming events, including a survey where you can share your preferences for the kinds of social events you'd like to see this year. If you have any suggestions or questions throughout the year, please feel free to catch me or a committee member at pick up or drop off time, or email [committee@mpc.net.au](mailto:committee@mpc.net.au).

Clair Perkins (President) - Unit 2/3



**Something new is coming to our entry area soon...do you want some clues?**

- it is rectangular in shape
  - it is comfortable
  - it will help you relax
  - it will be a lovely place to read books
  - there will be more than one
- Now we just have to be patient and wait for the arrival.

We acknowledge the Turrbal and Yaggera Peoples, for the Land and Waterways where we learn and play.  
We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.



Welcome to our first Newsletter for the 2024 Kindy year! Since our first playdates in January to now, there have been so many conversations buzzing past the office. We get to hear snippets of stories and of course the emotions that children are feeling either before or the end of the day. We recognise that it is not always an easy transition from home to Kindy or vice versa but please remember we are here to support you if you need us. Over the last six weeks we have certainly been busy getting to know many of the children during their Kindy day and saying hello to all the families as you enter and leave. Don't forget to come and see us if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas we are always happy to listen. Your voice in our community kindergarten is important to us and we want you to feel welcome and that this is just as much your space as your child's.

In our January PD Days before the children arrived the staff spent time focussing on ways to settle and get to know the children, you our families, and create the important sense of belonging that MPC feels is vital and the heartbeat of our community. We made a commitment to ourselves to go slow, to take time to make choices that best inform our practice and how we can best make the early connections with the children. Our other focus was to make our documentation, planning, and reflective practices more unified across the groups. As teachers we are very practiced and aware of a variety of ways of planning and showing how our growing knowledge and understanding of the children's development, together with their ideas and interests, and working out ways to extend and refine skills that may be required is part of our profession. Collectively this year we have devised a programming format that we are trialing, and we will spend time at our meetings and PD days this year discussing what tweaks we have made to suit our individual practice. There are a number of electronic platforms that could access, but we feel that they don't entirely fit the mould of MPC and we would like to be creative and make something that suits us. We hope you enjoy seeing this format to inform you of what is happening in your child's group. If you have any comments, please forward them to your child's teacher or to us at [directors@mpc.net.au](mailto:directors@mpc.net.au).

We had our first staff social gathering after the family afternoon on the weekend. Not all of our 25 staff team could be there but the laughter and stories and continuing connections that we all feel is valuable to making MPC a great place to work was certainly alive.

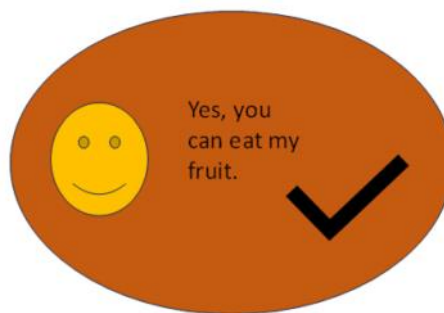
So welcome to our new and returning children and families to MPC.

From all the MPC Team.

# Continuing our RAP journey with purpose and feeling!

Anna Dutney and Louise Wood

MPC is continuing to provide a habitat not only for our nurtured and much loved wildlife that visit our leafy grounds but we are trying to provide the opportunities to grow more native trees and bush tucker species in our grounds. In 2023 we were lucky enough to win 2 grants to begin to purchase plants for our bush tucker gardens and extend our native species. Throughout the Centre you may notice a number of plants that have a label on them that tell us they are safe to eat certain parts of the plant. As the year progresses the children will begin to learn about the plants that our Indigenous peoples used for food and also for medicinal purposes. Our hope is that over time we will be able to pick various parts or fruits of the plants for children to sample or use in cooking experiences. At this stage many of our plants are still in infancy stages and not ready to produce fruits, but in time and with care we are looking forward to these opportunities.



## What is Bush Tucker?

- The Indigenous Australians lived off the land before the British invaded Australia.
- Plants contributed significantly to their diet and medicines.
- These plants are known as Bush Foods, Bush Tucker, Bush Medicine etc.
- Our knowledge is limited because at the time of the First Fleet arrival there was:
  - unreliable and poor record keeping
  - widespread destruction of Aboriginal culture



Have you seen our mother and baby Brush Tail possums. It is adorable seeing and hearing the 3's group children standing at the base of the possum box making a lip smacking sound to encourage them to pop their heads out!



## Why Grow Native Plants?

 <p>They require little to no watering</p>	 <p>They require little to no fertilizing</p>	 <p>They are adapted to the soil conditions</p>
 <p>They are adapted to the climate</p>	 <p>They provide food for native pollinators</p>	 <p>They provide shelter for local wildlife</p>

Infographic by Sustainable Play Preschool

*Parents are the best language teachers for their child and this learning starts from birth. Oral language and communication skills are the foundations that enable children to learn. The more enriched and diverse a child's vocabulary and knowledge of the world, the more information they have to build on and grow.*

1. Parent can assist children's speech and language in the following ways:

*Model the speech and language to want your child to use*

*Sing*

*Talk (Talk about everything. What are you doing, thinking or seeing)*

*Imagine*

*explore*

*Read - Reading to your child daily supports, cognitive development, improves language skills, prepares for academic success, fosters a special bond with your child, increases concentration, improves imagination and creativity and cultivates a lifelong love of reading.*

2. Literacy is the gateway to ALL future learning!

3. Top tips for engaging with books.

Choose books and topics you know they will love

Have your child choose their own books from the library

Read before bed – it's a great way to wind down, relax and end the day

Let them choose the books they want to read each night (Re-reading the same book is ok)

Ask questions while you read

If they are not interested in the story, go off script and talk about the pictures, or try another book instead!

4. What developmental milestones should I expect?

5. By the age of four years...

6. We expect your child will be able to:

follow three-part directions

understand some time words, such as 'soon' and 'tomorrow'

understand common shape and colour names

ask 'who' 'what' and 'why' questions

answer simple 'how' questions

speak in four-to-five-word sentences

use correct grammar with some errors, such as 'I falled down'

Speak clearly enough to be understood by most people Talking with my four-year-old...

7. Ways to extend your child's language even more:

Ensure a good listening environment

Give your child longer instructions

Use auditory highlighting to emphasise important words

Talk about how things can be grouped together (categories)

Make time to listen to your child's stories

Correct grammatical errors in a positive way by repeating the child's sentence correctly

Read longer stories to your child

Continue to be the narrator (Talk about everything you are doing, seeing or thinking)

Make experience books about special outings

Always model the next language step for your child

8. What if you are concerned about your child's speech/language/communication/play. You can:

*Talk to your kindy teacher about your concerns*

*Get hearing tested*

*Check developmental norms for what to expect at their age*

*Talk to your GP – referral to a Speech Pathologist (or self-refer)*

9. To find a Speech Pathologist you can visit [speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://speechpathologyaustralia.org.au).

Thank you, Lynda, for sharing this information with us. The teachers at MPC are always keen to listen, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher should you have any questions about your child's speech and language development.



**Remember it is OKAY and NECESSARY to take time for you.**

Go for a walk.

Take a breath. 3 Slow Deep Breaths can work !

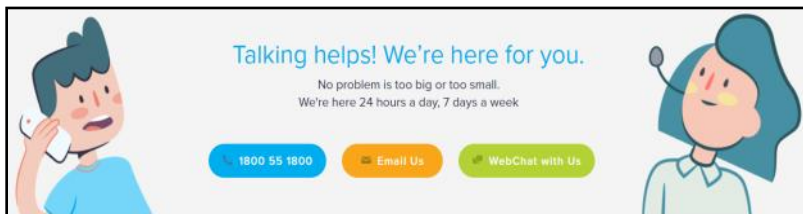
Tag a friend or partner for some time out.

Tell your family you are having a 'quiet break' to recharge, encourage them to try doing it too. Set a timer so all can see when you are ready to emerge (or not)

Talk—bottling thoughts and emotions up is not helpful and solves nothing.

Prioritise one part of your day that is about you. If you start with just a small 'glimpse' the benefits will grow to more.

Write your thoughts down, this can help plan how to problem solve or work towards a goal .



Parentline  
<https://parentline.com.au>

Parentline | Phone Counselling Service | 1300 30 1300

1300 30 1300 ; Pregnancy & Babies. aged 0 to 3 ; Preschoolers. aged 3 to 5 ; Kids. aged 5 to 8 ; Older Kids. age 9 and up ; Parents & Carers. all about you.

## Staying Healthy at Kindy



Please remember to keep your child at home if they are unwell. The spread of germs happens very quickly in this environment which not only affects the children but the staff as well. If your child is not feeling well they can not fully participate in the kindy day . You know what it feels like when you are not well and need to keep on functioning as a parent or at work, consider your child's perspective when they are 1 of 22 in a busy classroom. Home and resting is the best place, along with a quiet cuddle on the couch under a blanket makes recovery for all a better place.

## Making Connections through shared interests Elke, Vanessa, Pam (Unit 1 /2 Group)

In the early days of Kindergarten children are developing a sense of connectedness to their world. This connectedness helps them relate to the values, traditions and practices of their families, kindergartens, communities, and the wider world. It supports them to learn about the interconnectedness of people and environments. Over time, this learning transforms the ways they interact with others. Connectedness involves children's understanding of and consideration for the rights of others and their respect for diversity.

Building friendships with peers brings pleasure, comfort, and important opportunities to learn and develop in a social world. Friends, help children feel good about themselves, help children adapt more easily to early childhood environments and helps children build self-confidence.

As children play with others, they build skills that help with their friendships now and in the future. Skills such as sharing, taking turns, co-operating, listening to others, managing disagreement, and negotiating different ways of thinking about things.

In Unit 1 children have been building friendships through common and shared interests, in particular, watching, drawing, creating with paint and craft, and inquiry-based learning about the beautiful Golden Orb Weaver spider living on the treehouse.



Children have made connections with each other, in small and large groups, when painting with different props and mediums, weaving wool and pop stick webs, designing spiders in the making area using shared craft resources, creating a variety of large and small insect/spider worlds on the verandah, in the treehouse, in the front courtyard and with the dough, whilst others used the mobilo, sticks & hoops and stickle bricks to create and discuss different types of spiders.

The inquiry-based play and learning enabled children to experience a sense of belonging and connectedness through shared common interests. The friendships formed help to increase capacity for empathy and altruism, boosts happiness, well-being and self-confidence, promotes a positive outlook on life, lessens stress, builds communication skills and collaboration.



### **MPC Enrolment Lists - 2025 and beyond are OPEN!**

- ◆ Do you have younger children?
- ◆ Do you want the option of sending them to MPC?
- ◆ Is their name on the Enrolment Waiting List?

**Do it now!** .....you will then have peace of mind, knowing you don't have to think about it anymore. It's easy. Complete a form online or collect one from the office. Complete an additional form if you are considering MPC 3's group. **MPC does not have a sibling policy**, and offers and choice of groups for new enrolments are

We often refer to kindy as 'fun'. Although this is certainly a true statement, we sometimes forget that kindy presents many and varied challenges for children. The transition from home to kindy involves separating from parents, adapting to a new environment with new routines, using new equipment and taking on new responsibilities. Children are also learning to gain trust and feel secure with their teachers and a whole new group of peers.

Each child tackles these challenges differently. Some may cry or whine or may become angry at drop off or pick-up time, while others transition happily. Challenging behaviours may occur for quite a long time or may disappear after initial starting days and are more likely to happen when your child is tired or at the end of their Kindy week. For some children it is often difficult to express their fears and concerns and accept our reassurances in the moment. You may see children become upset or unreasonable. Your own child may talk with you about children who are sad or who cry and have tantrums. This is a great opportunity to discuss your child's concerns and build some new coping strategies together. Acknowledge that their feelings of worry or concern are valid. For example, you could respond by saying, 'Tom is still learning to..... The teacher will help Tom when he is upset. If you are worried you could talk to your teacher. Your teacher will always keep you and everyone safe. The teacher will help you when you don't know what to do.'

Emotional regulation and practicing new ways of coping in challenging moments is a learning journey for us all. As the children gain experience and understanding of the routine and their new kindergarten environment, they become braver and more open to practicing and slowly developing some different coping strategies. Our goal is for children to develop essential life skills, knowledge and strategies to enable them to cope in new situations.

Teachers and parents work together to find strategies that are best suited to your child's transition into kindy. It is very important that you speak with the teachers if your child is worried or concerned, or if you are unsure about situations that may have occurred. Conversations go a long way to building trust between parents and teachers for the children's benefit.

Other ways to help combat feelings of uncertainty is to nurture your child's sense of self-confidence. Self-esteem grows when children begin to view themselves as capable and independent. At kindy and at home, supporting children in their attempts at independence are milestones to be acknowledged and celebrated. That means giving children space and time to have-a-go themselves. When you and other important people in their lives remark on their achievements – 'You played with other children at kindy today – you must feel very happy about making new friends', or 'You carried and unpacked your own bag today at kindy– that's very responsible', you are reinforcing a positive sense of self. Learning what to do when things don't always turn out as expected like forgetting your hat, and having to wear a spare kindy hat, will not only motivate the child to think and forward plan (e.g. I need to pack my bag), but will begin to build life skills such as resilience, organization and self-help.

Although you may be feeling exhausted and emotionally drained if your child is having difficulties separating or settling into kindy, be reassured that this can be a positive learning experience as you support your child to manage a range of experiences and emotions. Stay strong, be confident in your approach and remember that your child will pick up on any anxieties that you may be feeling. Also remember that this is a big transition time for children and they need time and support to adjust to a new way of being content and happy.



Conversation skills are important for children's development and wellbeing. That's because being able to have conversations helps children make friends, be listened to, ask for what they need and develop strong relationships with others. Conversation skills are about being able to talk and listen well. ([Raisingchildren.net.au](http://Raisingchildren.net.au) 2022)

As we begin our Kindy year the art of conversation skills is so important to get to know our little people and you, our parents. Through conversation we are building a sense of trust and belonging, which is the core of getting to know one another. As your children see this adult interaction, they are gaining a sense that this is an okay place and that information is shared through reciprocal chatter, taking turns, waiting, and listening. They can see facial expressions, concern, serious, excited, enlightenment and perhaps hear some laughter, even sometimes tears. We are role modelling manners and greetings, listening with eye contact and listening quietly! As adults we have taken many years to perfect the art of conversation, and for some it still does not come easily. We have learned to accept the quiet and shy along with the brave and gregarious and even the rambunctious, it is an important social skill we deal with every day.

In these early days of Kindy, we are beginning to build the art of listening and taking turns to share the **very important information must come out right now**, or they might explode! We love our group conversations, and equally listening to a quiet one on one conversation when we are sitting beside your child, and they get to tell us a story. Listening and acknowledging helps us to build that same sense of belonging and trust with your child as we do with you.

Learning to wait at being one of twenty- two is enormous! In our group sessions at times we use our talking stick to take turns to say what is on our mind and then passing it to the next person. This is a reminder, it is my turn when the stick is in my hands, oh the power of a talking stick!

Through the course of the day, when at play, gathering at transition times or morning tea and lunch, learning how to listen, talk and take turns at this stage is very much a time for practice. Learning to listen, is vital to learning routines and hearing information that is needed for the flow of the day. The children may hear us say, 'it is my turn to talk and your turn to listen', 'this is important information for you to remember', 'these are the instructions to follow'. Many occasions during the day the children will also hear us say, "Did you listen/hear what ...just said to you" or "...is talking to you, can you help them or listen to what they are asking?" These conversations can revolve around a dilemma, an idea, a discovery or just a comment, but what is vital to learning about the art of good conversation is to learn to stop, look and listen. Our role as educators and parents is to give the children the sense that what they have to say is important and needs to be acknowledged by listening to them. If we model these important behaviours, they will learn that the art of good conversation means, stopping, looking, and listening to the message that is being shared, and learn how to respond. I would encourage everyone to look at the article on the [Raisingchildren.net.au](http://Raisingchildren.net.au) page for some good practical tips and reminders on conversation skills.





Do you remember using wooden blocks during your own early learning years?

Wooden blocks have been an integral part of MPC for decades and over the years, have been used by many small hands and minds. There is no right or wrong way to use blocks, the possibilities are endless. Hence there is a purposeful reason, we continue to keep these age-old beauties in our rooms and offer them in our outdoor play spaces.

Blocks are open ended, useful loose part tools which aid children's inquiry and play based learning. Children learn important skills when playing with blocks in social settings- They learn how to share, negotiate, problem solve and cooperate.

During an Early Childhood Australia Conference in 2022, Kim and I listened to Dr Kym Simoncini talk about the rich early learning development and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) learning opportunities offered by block play. *"Block play fosters physical, language and cognitive development as well as creativity and imagination"* Simoncini 2022

Block play helps to develop spatial language skills including position and location words (Behind, in front, on top, under and beside). It helps develop Maths skills, length, size, patterning, shape and number.

In unit 2/2 the children have spent their first five weeks exploring all on offer in the Kindy environment. Some children have been experimenting with the use of the room blocks and ways they can be played with, arranged, and manipulated.

We look forward to seeing how the block play progresses throughout the year as the children begin to explore the endless possibilities. By sharing these insights with you we hope to highlight the importance of block play and the early learning foundations that are developing when children engage in this type of activity.



**Links to the EYLF V2.0**

Block play supports Learning Outcomes 4 and 5 and aligns with the principle of play-based learning and intentionality of the *Early Years Learning Framework (V2.0) (EYLF V2.0) (AGDE, 2022, p.20)*. The Australian Education Research Organisation's (2021) *Tried and Tested* early numeracy guide describes many ways to use blocks to develop children's mathematical and numeracy skills and support the EYLF V2.0 Learning Outcomes.



Reference:

'Building Blocks for learning' Early Childhood Australia- Dr Kym Simoncini

Supporting, nurturing and guiding children's development and wellbeing in the early years of life is at the heart of our practices and philosophy. Over these past 6 weeks (can you believe we are more than half way through the term already?) we have been focussing on building positive and trusting relationships with the children and between the children, to develop a safe foundation for them to explore, grow, laugh and learn during their time here.

Some children have been quick to jump in and embrace kindy life and others have been more comfortable staying close to adults as they build trust, connections and a sense of belonging. We hope that you feel a sense of belonging at MPC also, as we start to build relationships with you all and work together to nurture and guide your children this year.

Drop off and pick up times are often busy as we greet and settle children into the day and then say goodbye at the end of the day. There is a communication book on top of the Take Home Shelf to add any general messages for us e.g if your child woke really early, or is having their first stay at aftercare. Email and phone are excellent ways to contact us also, but once the children have arrived, my focus is the children and I won't check emails until after kindy, so if it is something we need to know throughout the day, please call or use the communications book if we haven't had the time to talk with you that morning.

We have busy days as you can imagine and throughout the day, we also need to have some quieter times and spaces to let our bodies and brains slow down a bit. Being part of a group of 22, also means that you are part of a group with 21 other personalities and learning styles. We talk about being 'fair, safe and kind' with the children to help support them in negotiating, risk assessment and considering how their actions also impact others. This also helps children recognise and celebrate differences and commonalities in all of us and build a sense of connection and belonging.

One of the ways we help our bodies to slow down when they are feeling or looking 'fast and wriggly' or to calm our worries (this might feel like we have butterflies in our stomach) is to do our Star Breathing or use our breathing wands.

### **Star Breathing**

It can bring the body back into balance by slowing down and deepening your breathing and heart rate. One hand is the star, the other is 'magic pencil'. Keep slow and steady breaths. Start at the base of your thumb. As you inhale slide pointer finger up to the tip and breath out as you slide down the other side and continue until you get all the way down the side of your pinky finger to your wrist.



I had the pleasure of hearing Dr Justin Coulson speak at the Lady Gowrie conference a few weekends ago with fellow MPC colleague Anna Dutney. Justin has had a successful career with the "Happy Families" podcast as well as appearing on tv in "Parental Guidance".



Justin spoke about the differences between having a growth or fixed mindset and focused a lot on children saying, "I can't". He believes "I can't" means "I don't want to" which is a fixed mindset. Someone with a growth mindset would believe "I can't yet but if I practise, I will be able to". A growth mindset is really about potential. They can achieve if they believe they can.

What we do with children affects how they perform and sets the foundation for further education, and he gave several examples of how to help your child (or yourself) develop a growth mindset:

- Say "I can't, yet"
- Acknowledge that we are all on a path and can learn new things
- Stop making it about outcomes and focus on learning the process
- Praise the process not the outcome

Justin believes when we use praise too much with children and when we praise someone, we often infer low ability. Adults give inflated praise to children with low self-esteem. This inflated praise results in children not taking up the challenge for fear of not measuring up.

Instead, help the child to self-reflect on how they did and give no judgement, evaluation or assessment on what they did. Ask questions like:

- Tell me what happened?
- How did you do that?
- What could you do again?
- You seem happy, how do you feel?
- Is there any way I can help you?

Use the same questions when they fail to help them reflect to turn self-evaluation into personal reflection. If they have failed, say "Let's have a think about it and we can talk about it later" then ask:

- What do you really think?
- How do you really feel?
- Are you happy or sad?

Give them a while to ponder these questions then talk about what happened.

Justin's other ways to help your child build their Growth Mindset include:

- Build Belonging – give them feedback, gratitude and encourage personal assessment. Use involvement and trust.
- Provide a support structure

Encourage autonomy. Provide clear rationales for behavioural requests such as "we are going to do this because" but encourage choice where possible.



Teamwork in the digging patch to share space



Pondering



Conquering outdoor equipment



Building connections

# Playgroup with Jo

Playgroup mornings with Jo is a quiet and relaxing opportunity for you to play with your child in the outdoor spaces at Kindy. Come and join us every second Saturday of the school Term.

**\$10 per family from 9.00am to 10.30am**

Our first playgroup was held on Saturday with 6 families attending for a quiet play in the MPC groups. Jo always has some inviting spaces set up for the children to explore, but they also have the freedom to create their own adventures with the adult that accompanies them.

**Dates for the Term One and Two are:-**

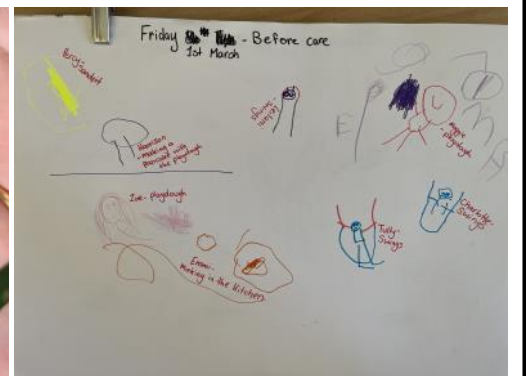
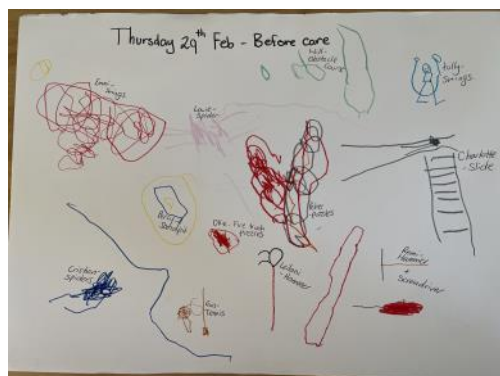
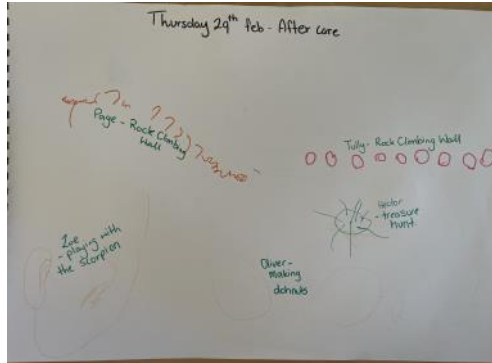
March 16th

April 10th and May 4th and 18th

June 1st and 15th

## Before & After Kindy Care Pam, Yvonne, Shari, Kim, Kaitlin, Kate, Jules, Jo, Sue and Selvi

**Do you wonder what happens at B & A when you drop your child off or before you pick them up?** Don't forget to check out the B & A Book with the children's drawings from the sessions. You may not see a drawing from all the children, but the idea of this book is to provide a glimpse of what someone or the children may have had a focus on. It is located on the bench where you sign your child sign in/out. Here are a couple of pages for you to see.



**Don't forget to join the Breakfast Club...** Don't forget for our early arrivals in the mornings to pack some breakfast for your child to eat. Sometimes being able to sit at Kindy with others having their breakfast is a more relaxed meal for them and one less thing to have to rush before you race out the door.



Puzzles are fixed at the local men's shed

Annual children's clothes swap



Respect for self, others and the environment underpin the MPC philosophy. Understanding about sustainability and the importance of looking after the earth are key practices in our community Kindy . These are some of the ways you will see our Sustainability through the MPC lens.



Welling and social support for all



Encouraging children to just take what they need and leave some for others...

## Keep bringing your items in

Don't forget to bring your recycling in. The money raised from this recycling project with Terra cycle we donate to charities close to home and further away. In 2023 we donated \$100 each to 'Fiva for a Farmer' and an African Orphanage for abandoned children.



# Parent News and Advertising Opportunities

If you have something to advertise, don't forget to add it to the Community notice board in the courtyard.

