

St John's Preschool – Newsletter

March 2017



Welcome to our first newsletter for 2017!

We've had a busy 6 weeks back at preschool, with everyone settling in well. We currently have 99 children enrolled at St John's which leaves us with just a few places remaining (mostly 3 year olds).

All our classes have experienced an "Outside the Gate" excursion out into the church grounds to do some exploring, as well as visiting the hall next door.

Our 4-year-old classes on Wednesdays have also been going to the hall weekly for Munch & Move "Fundamental Movement Skills" workshops run by the teachers. It's been great exercise and a good learning experience for all!

This term we have a parent, Julie Haddad, volunteering her musical skills to play piano for the children every Thursday as part of their music lessons. We are trying to organise something similar for Tuesdays, so if you would like to be involved (or know someone who might be interested), please let us know!

Despite the rainy weather, we all loved the Teddy Bear's Picnics last week at preschool. It's fun to see the children having these new experiences and sharing those with their friends. And we also raised \$165 for The Children's Hospital at Westmead in the process! So, thank you for your support, and also to all the helpers who came along on the day.

There's lots more fun planned for the rest of Term 1... Harmony & Cultural Celebration Day, Kaleidoscope Science Excursion, and our Easter activities (see dates at the end of this newsletter).

The church building work is finishing up shortly, so the playground on Alt Street will once again be more accessible. This should mean there are less trucks around, but please be careful with the cars and children – whether you're driving or walking!

Also, a reminder when you're leaving preschool at the end of the day – your children (both preschoolers and siblings) should remain with you whilst on preschool grounds and as you leave. Once they are signed out, they are your responsibility. Please also remember to CLOSE THE GATE when you're coming or going.



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Class Updates

Jacaranda 3-day class

Our Monday - Wednesday class have been fascinated by weather at the moment, especially tornadoes. Some of our children tell us about information that they learnt at home about tornadoes and are teaching their peers lots of facts. We extended this in our classroom by creating an investigation area around weather and making tornadoes in a jar together.



Jacaranda 2-day class

Our Thursday - Friday class really enjoy building and creating at the art table. We are seeing the children's creativity and problem solving skills develop as they talk with the teachers about how they could make different buildings, animals or vehicles from boxes and craft material.

Frangipani 3-day class

We have some emerging wildlife warriors in our class! We have been busy investigating marine animals; we created an underwater world, decorating our window with colourful fish, we talked about what features enable sea creatures to live in their environment (fins, flippers, scales). Then as summer disappeared and autumn arrived, we talked about the change of season, and our wildlife interests have turned to the creatures in the preschool outdoor yard. The children have been noticing the birds that visit the yard, and the mini-beasts like snails, beetles and centipedes in the garden. We learnt about the life cycle of mosquitos after discovering wriggler larvae in pools of water left after the rain.

We have also been investigating healthy foods and sometimes foods; this has been in conjunction with the weekly Munch & Move sessions. We talked about the best foods to include for our lunches- fruit & vegetables, dairy foods, sandwiches, noodles, rice and pasta. We talked about sometimes foods, like chips, lollies, cakes and chocolates being for parties and special occasions.



Frangipani 2-day class

The children have made a great start to the year; they are busy investigating everything! We have concentrated on the children developing a sense of belonging in the Frangipani Room, getting used to interacting with teachers and new friends, becoming familiar with routines such as group time, music and sitting down for meals. We are encouraging the children to develop their sense of autonomy and agency by managing these routine experiences themselves: washing and drying their own hands; finding their own morning tea and lunch containers; opening packets and bottles; and tidying away after themselves. We encourage children to think of themselves as competent learners who can do very many things on their own initiative.

The 2 Day Group also love having Julie play the piano during music; we are learning songs together such as "Twinkle, Twinkle", "Put a Spot over here", and "The Wheels on the Bus". We also learnt "If I were a Butterfly."



Lilli Pilli 2-day class

Books have been a strong interest among all children in the classroom. It helps the children settle in during drop off times as well as it provides with opportunities for them to bond with teachers and peers. Very often the children spontaneously gather around a teacher to listen to stories that they choose from the book shelf. And this happens even during outdoor play! To foster their love for books we now have a roster for each child to bring a book from home and share it with their friends during group times. 'Bring a book to preschool' promotes children's sense of belonging as they share aspects of their identity with the class.



Lilli Pilli 3-day class

The block construction area has been very popular lately. We have seen the children working in pairs or in large groups to build castles, shark houses and other creations. Collaborative works provide with opportunities for the children to develop important social skills such as turn taking, leadership skills while being inclusive of their peers' contributions, work for a common goal, etc. Through block construction the children are learning how to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect. Positive interactions with others has also been our current discussions during group times.



START STRONG

The NSW Government has this year introduced new funding arrangements for preschools. "Start Strong" is an 18-month funding commitment which has allowed us to reduce our fees for 2017.

The focus is on providing low cost early childhood education to children the year before they start school (4 year olds) and to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. To qualify for funding, children are required to be enrolled for least 15 hours of preschool per week.

For further information on the new funding package and the benefits of a preschool education, please check out <http://www.startstrong.nsw.edu.au/> or feel free to chat to Stephanie or Sue!

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

All childcares and preschool nationally are required to base their programming on the Early Years Learning Framework. The vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

It is a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to five years. They use the Framework in partnership with families - children's first and most influential educators - to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

If you would like to learn more about either the EYLF or the NQF and how this is implemented at St John's Preschool please speak with your room leaders or Stephanie.



Please "like" our facebook page – St John's Preschool Ashfield for more regular updates of our days.

Feedback

At St John's Preschool we are always trying to improve our process and performance and would value any feedback that you have. There is a letterbox in the foyer for any comments, or alternatively please speak with any of the staff at St John's Preschool

March & April Dates

- Preschool AGM @ 6PM on 14/03
- Trinity College - Service Week (Year 11-12 students to help at preschool) from Monday 20/03
- Harmony & Cultural Celebration Day - Tuesday 21/03 and Thursday 23/03
- Kaleidoscope Science Incursion @ 10am - Tuesday 28/03 and Thursday 30/03.
- Easter Church Visit - Tuesday 4/04 and Thursday 6/04
- Term 1 Afternoon Tea - Tuesday 4/04/ and Thursday 6/04
- Last day of Term 1 – Friday 7/04
- First day of Term 2 – Monday 24/04
- Anzac Day (Public Holiday) – Tuesday 25/04
- Preschool Working Bee – Saturday 28/04

Storypark

Just a reminder that we are using Storypark to share the children's daily activities with families and also for families to share stories and information with teachers. Please let us know if you have any trouble accessing this, and we can resend the invitation to join. This website is a secure website and can only be accessed through a login. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your classroom educators.