



Weelam Group Newsletter

Feb 2019



Womin djeka to our first Weelam group newsletter for 2019: How fabulous to now have everyone join us as Weelam group. We celebrated being together with a family picnic lunch and some parachute fun. The group are now getting to know everyone and find out about each other's interests and ideas. Thank you to all our families for working with us to support each child to transition happily into the program. Over the past three weeks we have been creating many opportunities for the children to be together, share experiences, learn their group friend's names and to work in small groups. The teaching team have been helping everyone to explore, meet new friends and gradually learn the routines within the program. We are supporting and encouraging each child to follow their interests, find solutions when they are challenged and know they can ask for assistance when required. There are many 'jobs' to be done and the children are being encouraged to take responsibility for watering the garden, caring for the chickens, sweeping, raking and assisting when it is time to tidy up. Taking care that your friends feel OK and included are important values that are encouraged within the group, the children are being assisted to learn the words they can say and the actions they can take to be a friend. For each child being in their preschool year is an enormous time of learning, with our support they learn not only about the many wonders of the world, it is also a time when they learn about the complexities within relationships, how their actions impact others and how others make them feel. You will hear us talking about and teaching friendship and being a friend during each session. These are emerging skills for children of this age group and with our guidance we can support them to have many friends and understand how to care, be kind, show empathy, to share and take turns within all relationships. At Balnarring preschool we take a First Peoples perspective which means all relationships include each other, our families, the Land / waterways and the creatures that live within them.

Being a friend:



**Learning together*



** Being a friend to our plants*



**sharing ideas and experiences*



**sharing conversations*

The group are enjoying stories and music times together, toast Tuesday has become a popular time of the week (thanks to our friends who have bought in homemade blackberry jam and 'real honey' for our toast. On Thursday Restaurant day we have been making lots of 'bugs' and 'caterpillars' with the tomatoes from our garden and grapes. Sitting together eating is also a great opportunity for sharing conversations, to learn new friend's names and engage in a discussion together.



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Learning and Living with nature

Bush Camp and Beach experiences:



The children have all settled very happily into Bush Camp and the beach environments, each week we have been exploring further, introducing the children to new areas, discovering trees to climb, cubbies to share with a friend and walking along the now familiar paths. There is a sense of curiosity and wonder as discoveries are made and we share our knowledge with each other. The weather has allowed us to experience both heat and rain both of which the children managed very positively, especially when the showers came and we made our 'red cubby' on the beach to hide from the rain. Please see our group diary and your child's blue folder for more stories...



**trees provide new challenges and special 'cubbies' to be in.*

**our wave game..."run"*

**working on an idea together*



**our discoveries are becoming stories*

** we wonder what we have found?*

Did you know this is green algae?

Building on our bush camp and beach experiences:

We have been 'map making' to assist the children to become familiar with the landmarks we see and explore when we in these outdoor environments. Map making also assists us as teachers to learn what is important to each child, we find it helps them understand what we will be doing for the session and where we will return to at the end of the session. The children have been sharing their maps with each other and have begun some map making back at preschool. Each map is unique



and there is always a great story to listen to. Our journeys at Bush camp and to the beach offer many learning opportunities and unexpected moments. In one group when we arrived at the beach we noticed a tractor and big boat, we wondered why they were there? When we took a closer look we saw that the tractor was stuck in the sand and the trailer looked stuck too!! Next we heard another tractor coming, it was bigger and we saw the guys attached the big tractor. We watched as it went to pull out the tractor and boat, but the big tractor got stuck too!!!! Now they had a bigger problem, we talked about how sometimes problems just get bigger and we thought of ways they might get out. Unfortunately we had to leave our story there as it was nearly time to go home and we had to return to Bush Camp. We came up with more ideas about how to save the tractors as we walked back to see our families again at Bush camp, announcing our arrival with "COO EEE"

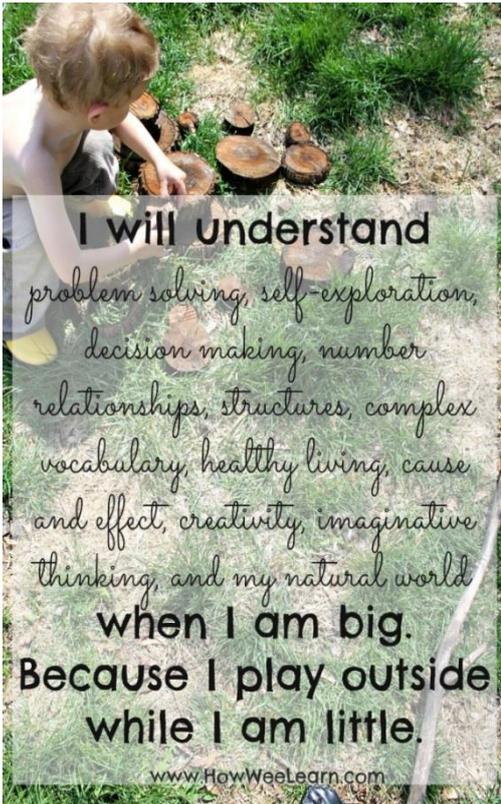


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Learning and Living with nature

Our learning diary: We have been recording our learning stories and adventures in our group diary, please take a look at the photos and stories that the team, parents and children have taken and written. We are encouraging the children to work in the diary, they are cutting out the photos, drawing pictures and telling us the words to write. The program goals and experiences are also displayed within the diary. You are welcome to look at and write your own thoughts within the diary whenever you are at the preschool. We update it every day so please keep checking.



A huge "Thank you" to everyone who helped at working bee, you were fantastic and we achieved so much with all your weeding, fixing, cleaning, raking, rubbish removal, our garden certainly looked very different when everyone had finished.

We would also like to thank you for your patience as we gradually supported the children to feel more confident being in the program and learning about their new learning environments. To everyone who has come to join us to play and assist within the program already we have appreciated your support and it is terrific when our parents and families share their interests and skills with us. **Our roster is now available beside the sign in book**, please put your name down and join us when you can. Your younger children are welcome and it is OK if you can't stay all session just let us know.

Individual folders: Each Weelam group friend has their own special Blue folder, we have begun adding to the folders and working with them. Please return your child's folder back to the shelf and we will add some more stories so your child can share them with you at home. You are welcome to write your stories too so your child can share his family experiences with us.

Story Star: We have begun sharing our family stories and photos within the Blue folders. Each session in small groups four children have told us about their family, what they like to do and where they like to go. The children are encouraged to ask questions, to listen to their friends as they tell their story and to make connections within the conversations. We are enjoying looking at all the photos too.

PMP: We will be beginning our PMP program (perceptual motor program) on Thursdays starting 7th March, then fortnightly with the next session on 21st March and then 4th April in term One (the program will continue throughout the year).

What is PMP?

The Perceptual Motor Program (PMP) is a movement-based program which can assist the children to improve their eye/hand and eye/foot coordination, fitness, balance, locomotion and eye-tracking skills. The program uses a variety of equipment and focuses on engaging the children in organized challenges that they participate in with their small group. These activities rely on the assistance of volunteer parents as we set up a variety of experiences for the children to rotate around. For these sessions younger siblings are welcome to join us too. The aim of the program is to support the children to develop their Body awareness, Spatial awareness and ability to regulate their movements, to persist when challenged and practice and achieve new skills. It is also fun working with your team and supporting your friends within your group. Before Thursday 7th March I will put out a roster, please put your name down if you can help us between start of preschool till 10:30am. Assisting at PMP is a great way to meet all the children and learn about your children's friends. We look forward to your help so we can offer this program.



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Upcoming events:

V.I.P. (Very Important Person) Night at Bush camp:

Before the end of term (while we still have daylight savings) we will be holding an evening session at Bush camp. We are just finalizing the date and will let you know asap. This will be a special night for each of the children to bring an important grown up person along to Bush camp with them so they can show them what they do and how we go to the beach. This is a great opportunity for parents who work during our session times and who are further away to come join us for a session. Please start thinking who this important person might be and let them know an invite is coming soon.

Harmony Day: Thursday 21st March, to acknowledge Harmony Day and celebrate diversity and the many countries we are all connected with through our ancestors we will join together for a family lunch on this day. Please start thinking about your family, its history and the countries your family are connected with, we will begin exploring this further throughout March and Harmony Day is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the diversity within our own group.

End of term: For your information End of term for Weelam group is Thursday 4th April

***There are more exciting experiences being planned that we will let you know about soon.*

Information about The smoking ceremony (Held at Family Night at Preschool)



“In a Smoking Ceremony, leaves of three plants may be used – Cherry Ballart (ballee), River Red Gum (biel) and Silver Wattle (muyan). The cherry ballart is a plant that requires support when young but has strong resilient wood. The cherry ballart symbolises youth. The wattle was vital to local clans, every part being used: seeds, bark, wood and gum. It represented the elders. The red gum is the most widespread eucalypt in Australia and is symbolic of the entire community and the community’s access to the land and its resources. As you walk through this smoke, you are also walked through and protected by a physical merge of the old and the new. Smoke cleanses the visitor, and was a ritual to discourage bad intent.

Reference: Aboriginal Resource Trail Royal Botanical garden

We welcome your reflections from this evening, please write your thoughts and learning in our diary, please tell us what your children spoke about after the ceremony.



Childhood is a journey and as your teaching team we all feel very privileged to be part of each child’s learning journey and to be able to support them to develop new skills and friendships. If you have any questions and would like to share your thoughts and ideas for the program with us, please do not hesitate to speak to me during the session or make a time outside session times for us to chat together.

Enjoy this year, the time will go very quickly and we look forward to you being with us when ever you can, Kim, Cath, Betina, Lisa and Ann



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