

Balnarring Preschool & Infant Welfare Association

Learning and Living with nature



Manameet Reflections March 2020

I would like to start this newsletter by welcoming our newest member to the three-year-old team, Kim Evans. Kim joined us on our first full session in 3's back at the end of February and is an amazing educator who worked with Lisa and I in the three-year-old program last year. Kim also works as an educator in one of the four-year-old kinder groups here at Balnarring. We are very fortunate to have such a supportive committee and community who fully support the non-funded three-year-old program here at Balnarring. It allows us to run an amazing high-quality program for the threes and provide greater support and interaction with all the children.

At the end of February we also came together as a community for our annual three year old welcome night. This year Lionel Lauch a Gunditjmara Kirrae Wurrung-Bundjalung man came to our Womin djeka night to help us celebrate and begin our first peoples learning together. It was a powerful and inspiring evening and everyone who was able to come along thought it was a wonderful event and great way to connect with others. Families were able to develop a greater understanding of first people's culture and further develop their sense of belonging to the community.



Lionel Lauch shared his knowledge and understanding of first people culture with families tonight.

We learnt about different indigenous flora including those used in the smoking ceremonies and their use and significance. He taught us about the cultural significance of smoking ceremonies and we all joined in to walk around and through the smoke. We learnt and listened to language and to Lionel play the Yadiki as we relaxed and the healing and calming effects that it has on our bodies.



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During the past few weeks we have continued to build up our relationships with the children and get to know them as well as you our families. We have continued to support children with visuals, modelling, songs, rhymes and verbal instructions to engage in the program including the activities as well as the transitions and mat time. Children have learnt what a space invader is and have begun to learn some key word signs for words which help keep everyone safe and help them to regulate their emotions and understanding of situations. For instance, we have been practicing the signs for stop, wait and no. We have also been modelling and supporting children in one to one and in small groups to develop their understanding of safe and fair play. Safe play refers helps to keep everyone physically safe whereas fair play refers to positive social behaviours such as turn taking, sharing, kind words etc.

We have introduced children to the 'whistle game' where children were taught that when they hear the whistle they need to move to Jill or the adult blowing the whistle. This is part of our evacuation procedures but also our nature program. We explained that there are times at kinder that we need to come together as a group for many different reasons and one of them is to keep safe. After I moved to different emergency exits inside and outside the kinder and blew the whistle children came to find me supported by Lisa and Kim. We revisited this and went through other ways we keep everyone safe when we go walking with Boon Wurrung Country. For instance, we always must see a red hat, we walk beside and behind Jill and in front of Lisa on the train and we are supported to stay safe within natural boundaries in the landscape. We had a wonderful time on our short walk to the reserve. Thank you to our families who joined us too. We enjoyed going through the secret door in the garden and jumping across the wooden stepping stones on the paths. We balanced on the rocks in the dry creek beds and learnt to climb and jump safely with Jill.



Whilst walking with BoonWurrung Country we are developing our sense of belonging and sense of place. With support we are beginning to notice things in the environment and build language and knowledge as we discuss them. We are developing gross motor skills and learning to take risks. We are learning to be safe climbers and the expectations when we are outside of kinder.

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Manameet has had as strong interest in sensory play, imaginative play (cooking) and construction, which we have been extending. It has been a lot of fun coming in to discover the 'tweaked' version of finger painting on offer which has sparked children's curiosity and exploration and been a lot of fun. These opportunities have allowed us to develop children's knowledge, support their interactions and communication, provided opportunities for them to develop social and emotional skills and to strengthen relationships with staff and begin to interact with peers. They have also offered opportunities to build on children's knowledge such as colour mixing, maths and science concepts like shapes, counting and magnets and understanding of the world through touch and textures.



We are talking and listening to others stories as we work. We are being curious and creative and are intrigued by the different textures, colours and materials. We are not focused on the end product but how we get there. We are building knowledge, learning that we can all have fun and succeed and that we can take risks and try new things. We are learning the learning is FUN!



Inside and out, with dirt, sand, rocks, toys and playdough we are loving cooking for our friends. When taking on adult roles children are developing their understanding of the world, they are developing and practising their expressive language and learning to cooperate and work alongside and with others.



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Once again thank you for all your support and for those who have stayed and played. Remember to sign up to the roster at the sign in book. I am hopeful that we will be able to run our Harmony Day Celebrations next week on the 27th March however, I will send you a message to confirm. We have also had another iteration of our group name and are returning to the spelling of Manameet

Thanks, Jill



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