



Weelam Group Newsletter

March 2020



Being together: Reflecting back over this last month there is so much I would like to share with you. All the children in the group are following their interests, sharing their strengths, actively exploring and seeking out new friends and challenges to engage with. They have become more confident, curious and are asking lots of great questions. As their teachers we have been building on their discoveries, supporting them when they seek further knowledge and assisting to build on their current understandings. Sometimes that means we will challenge what they may think to be true, offering another perspective or advocating another point of view or way of looking at a situation. We talk about how we don't always initially know or have all the answers and maybe ways we can maybe find out.

The children are learning that everyone has the right to be who they are, to like what they like and that diversity is to be celebrated not seen as different or negative. We have been assisting the children to work in small groups, to share experiences, to assist each other, acknowledge their strengths and to learn a little more about each other every day. We have welcomed many family members into the program to assist us over this term, sometimes joining us for the whole session when time allowed or for an experience or two. This has included helping with toast Tuesday, PMP and sitting reading stories under our beautiful tree. Thanks to all the parents and grandparents who have joined us and remember your little ones are always welcome too. Many thanks to everyone who helped at the Weelam group working bee with the cleaning, gardening, weeding, painting, wood cutting and tidy up of our play spaces. We appreciated all your work and the pride you took in making our preschool look great.

Literacy on the beach:

There have been many lower tides while we have been on the beach. The children are learning that this means that there will be smooth wet sand to draw in. The challenge has been to find a 'tool' to work with. As well as sticks, the feathers left by the birds for us to discover and a piece of cuttlefish washed up on the tide line allow for their creative work to be left on the beach for the incoming tide to take their images back into the sea.



The smooth sand offers us a wonderful large canvas to work with. The children are able to work together, alongside each other or find their own space. They can draw as large or as small as they like without the restriction of the borders of the paper and size restrictions.



Acknowledgement: Balnarring Preschool acknowledges that our children and families play and learn on Boon Wurrung Country. We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung of the Kulin Nation as the First Peoples of this land. We thank them for caring for the land and the waterways and value the sharing of their knowledge and stories. We pay our respects to their Elders: past and present.



Creating and finding Physical challenges in all environments: Each session the children have been challenging themselves to climb, balance, jump and move in many ways. They are becoming more aware of their bodies and how they can move in /out, over/ under, up/ down, through as these experiences are generally shared with group friends we are there to support them to increase their awareness of moving around others and to move being aware of their safety and for others. We have been actively seeking out these challenges in many ways. At preschool the children have been creating their own obstacle courses with the additional equipment in our sheds. They are many suggestions, taking turns and acknowledging their achievements as well as being supported to understand that some skills take practice, that sometimes we try something and we need to try again and that sometimes you just are not big enough yet. We have begun our PMP program fortnightly on a Thursday morning. For this program to be successful for everyone we need parent/ grandparent support. Please look at the roster and add your name to the list if you could assist us from 9am to 10:30pm. If you missed our last notice and are wondering what PMP is it can be described as a movement-based program which can assist young children to improve their eye/hand and eye/foot coordination, fitness, balance, locomotion and eye-tracking skills. Each session we will create a series of challenges for the children to engage with and to build their confidence, skills and body awareness.



Throughout our preschool week the children are becoming more confident to move on and along many surfaces. They are balancing using their arms like Bundjil's wings to keep them steady. They are noticing the different surfaces we move along on the beach, how sometimes the sand is hard, while other times it is really soft and hard to walk in. Our visits to the rock pools has required children to walk with care to ensure their own safety, but to also be respectful that they are walking on the homes of many creatures and it is important to take care and tread lightly in this environment. After all the recent rain the rain came the group



discovered a new environment to master- the dirt pit had become a mud pit with many puddles and by the time the children has finished all their excavation work an island surrounded by a river. As well as all the fun the children discovered the challenge of getting your gumboot out of the mud if you had stood too long in one place. This required several 'rescue teams' to come help others. There were big cheers as gumboots and friends were rescued (some

several times during the morning). Remember we warned you your child may get very dirty while working at kinder. Stay tuned for MUD DAY later in the year- we predict it will be a fun time this year.



Acknowledgement: Balnarring Preschool acknowledges that our children and families play and learn on Boon Wurrung Country. We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung of the Kulin Nation as the First Peoples of this land. We thank them for caring for the land and the waterways and value the sharing of their knowledge and stories. We pay our respects to their Elders: past and present.



Revisiting and reflecting on our learning times: *Our Learning diary is now filling with our stories of learning together. The children are being encouraged to actively work with the diary, to create the story pages and add their own images and thoughts. We encourage the children to work together to draw, 'write', cutting out and paste the photos and pictures. We have been recording the children's thoughts and words as they look at the images and recall the previous day experiences. Please take a look at our diary when you have time, as well as our reflections the diary also contains our program plans and thoughts for future possible experiences.*



Weaving learning experiences with each other and intentionally teaching literacy, body awareness, storytelling and cooking experiences through the story of Dampier Man.



Each child has added a portrait (drawing) of themselves to their own folder. We then read the story of Dampier Man, making our own last Thursday. These experiences assisted the children to become more aware of their body parts and how they join together. We then asked each child to find the photo of their Dampier Man and create their drawing of him and tell us their own story. We will add these to the folders too so the children can share their work with their families.



Quiet Moments:



We have been very aware that the children and their families are living in a time of rapid change, unpredictability and uncertainty. It has been our vision to create times that allow the children just to be, times to just slow down, to watch, to work quietly on a project with or without our support and to be able to talk with us if needed. These are just a couple of moments we have captured. The first of the children creating something of beauty, a rainbow sticks with wool and a time just being with your friend watching the snails move slowly within the rock pool.



Learning with Country: We have been enjoying some finer weather for our bush camp and beach experiences. The children are beginning to recognize the landmarks and paths that we travel along. As we go they are also asking about the other paths they see and are wondering about where they will take them one day. Our adventures have allowed us to see many creatures in their natural environments. We now know where Walert can be found sleeping in their nest and while eating morning tea by the creek we saw the wallaby hiding in the grass on the other side. They now know low tide means we can go looking for crabs in the rock pools and there was great interest in the large limpet shell we found on a rock. The



Acknowledgement: Balnarring Preschool acknowledges that our children and families play and learn on Boon Wurrung Country. We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung of the Kulin Nation as the First Peoples of this land. We thank them for caring for the land and the waterways and value the sharing of their knowledge and stories. We pay our respects to their Elders: past and present.



Learning and Living with nature

children were able to identify the shell by name after learning about these shells through one of our story books. It is always a very special time when we are able to watch Barbarka swim by, extra special when they stay for a while and we can watch them feed and swim wondering where they will come up next? This week as well as the fun we have with the red salt bush berries as face paint and nail polish, the children were introduced to how to make rock paint. They quickly began to experiment with different rocks, discovering which ones could be ground on another rock, how much water did you need and the different colours you could make from the many rocks around them. This knowledge was shared with others as friends came to watch what was happening and then inspired them to create their own paint to work with.

We walked down one of the paths that lead to the creek. The children were excited to find Waang there and I told them the story of how the children at our preschool had made Waangs last year and designed this one. We have been taught by the Elders to know Waang as the Protector of the Waterways- we talked about how we can care for water and why that is important. If you don't know where Waang is maybe ask you child to take you for a walk down the path to the creek. While we sat here we saw the kayaks go by with the school children we had spoken to earlier. Being out in the community offers us many opportunities learn about what others do.



Being Outside: To support everyone to be safe, and well for the past week we have increased and implemented additional hygiene practices and cleaning of surfaces. To increase everyone's time in the fresh air, wider spaces and sunshine the decision was made to move all learning experiences outside, create relaxed small group spaces as well as creating many opportunities for fun, joy and bad jokes!!

Balnarring Womin djeka Ngargee: Thanks to everyone who created and participated in the Balnarring Womin djeka Ngargee festival. It was a great day of music, honouring First Peoples stories, Knowledges and talents and learning for all. For me listening to the Elder A'rwee't Carolyn Briggs, Boon Wurrung Elder reinforced the importance of First Peoples ways of knowing and doing as part of our preschool program.

On behalf of all the Teaching team we thank everyone for the wonderful times of learning and Being together in Term One 2020. As we move into the weeks ahead we send everyone our wishes to stay safe and well. We look forward to the time we can all be back together again. At this point in time end of term will be 26th March. We will keep you updated of any changes. Take care, Ann



Acknowledgement: Balnarring Preschool acknowledges that our children and families play and learn on Boon Wurrung Country. We acknowledge the Boon Wurrung of the Kulin Nation as the First Peoples of this land. We thank them for caring for the land and the waterways and value the sharing of their knowledge and stories. We pay our respects to their Elders: past and present.