



Balnarring Preschool & Infant Welfare Association

Learning and Living with nature



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by ACECQA



Gareeal Reflections March 2021

What a wonderful time we have all been having in Gareeal Group this past month. Lisa, Kim and I have really enjoyed spending time with your beautiful bubups (children), getting to know them and build our relationships with them.

Our focus this last month has been to build relationships with the children and help them to feel comfortable and respected in the kinder and our group. Mutual respect is very important in our relationships with the children and we actively listen and engage with the children valuing who they are, their ideas, families and beliefs. These relationships with us as well as with their peers are crucial to developing your child's sense of belonging. Our Harmony Day celebrations on Friday allowed us to share First Peoples culture with all our families as well as show respect for who children are (their identity) as we welcome all families into the kinder. This helps to build children's sense of belonging as will our recipe book and 'All About Me homework' over the holidays (we will do more with these in term 2). Please feel free to send in a favourite family recipe over the following week if you have not done so already. These activities will help children become more confident as they share their interests and self with us at kinder.



Harmony Day - celebrating cultural diversity and recognising that we all belong. We had fun listening to stories, using clap sticks, singing indigenous songs and language and walking on Boon Wurrung Country. Today we built our confidence and sense of belonging as our families created our group display with us and we shared our kinder with them. Fostering a sense of community and belonging allows children to feel respected and encourages respect for others and difference.



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.



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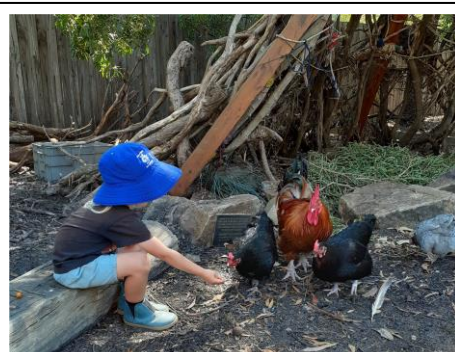
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Gareal has enjoyed sensory play experiences - fingerpaint, sand and water, imaginative play - building, construction and caring for the chickens. It has been a lot of fun discovering different textures and types of finger painting. It has sparked children's curiosity and exploration and been a lot of fun. These opportunities have allowed us to support children's language and communication and encourage interaction with peers and staff as well as increase their 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 and colours. We are not focused on the end product or making anything. We are playing and building knowledge, learning to try new things and be curious.



We have been caring for the chickens. We have learnt what to feed them and how to collect eggs and be safe and calm around them. We are showing empathy for them and being considerate. We enjoy having them in our garden with us and have learnt to get them to eat tomatoes from our hands. It takes lots of patience and kindness to build trust with the chickens.



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Before our nature walk last Friday, we 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 have also introduced board maker to the children which are visual cues that help all children understand the routines, transitions and other important tasks like toileting and hand washing at kinder. We have a schedule we put up each session to help them see what is happening at kinder that day and when their grown up will collect them. We have introduced different songs, rhymes and music to help children transition in the program as well as our high 5 listening rules to help during mat times. We have also been modelling and supporting children one to one and in small groups during play to help develop their understanding of safe and fair play. Safe play relates to how we keep everyone in the group physically safe (i.e. pushing, hitting, kicking, pinching, safe hands etc) whereas fair play refers to positive social behaviours and friendship skills such as turn taking, sharing and kind words. Children at this stage in their development often find it difficult to share and take turns and big emotions, tiredness and hunger can also impact this. We do not expect that children will be able to share and think of others all the time and without support at kinder. The aim is to help children engage and develop these skills throughout their childhood and an important part of this is teaching them and modelling these skills in play.



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I hope you have enjoyed the short texts I have sent with a few key things we have done after most sessions. I do keep a reflection book which you are welcome to flick through to see what we have been up to and I will start to send you all our reflection sheet each week via text going forward which will give you an idea of what we have done and also help you initiate conversations with your child about kinder. Be mindful of big open-ended questions like "what did you do today?" as these are daunting and require a lot of complex executive functioning skills to answer. Children may also have forgotten what they did even if you speak to them right away. To support children to build the skills to reflect on their day, you can try to offer ideas to help them think about what they did. For instance, you might say "I saw the digger in the sandpit it looked fun, or did you have a turn of the water pump today or feed the chickens" or you might try "I heard Jill read the story the hungry caterpillar, we have that book/you love that book" and then allowing your child time to respond. We also often focus on who our children play with and ask, "who did you play with today?". Again, children may not be able to answer this and will have spent time with many children in various activities. Last week I sent home a group photo collage to help children become more familiar with other children in their group.

Just a reminder that on Friday 26th March there is no kinder session as staff have a training day at the kinder. Instead, I hope to see everyone at our welcome evening on Thursday 25th March. See you in term 2.

THANKS, JILL 😊



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