



# Balnarring Preschool & Infant Welfare Association



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## Learning and Living with nature

### Manameet Reflections June 2021

It was wonderful to be able to continue to connect and teach your children at kinder despite the recent lockdown in Melbourne. We thank you for your support in helping your children to navigate the changes with drop off and pick up. They adapted to the changes very well. Over the last month the children have continued to get to share their All About Me pages and get to know each other and build understanding and respect for our differences and similarities with others. This helps to not only build children's friendship skills, identity and wellbeing but also encourages respect and inclusion.

Following a staff PD that all teachers attended recently on social and emotional learning through puppets, we introduced the children to Calm Cat. Calm Cat helps to teach children about managing Big Emotions like when we are upset. He likes a few pats and is very good at taking deep, long, slow breaths. The children really connected with Calm Cat and he will come out every now and then in the kinder room. More friends will join us soon.

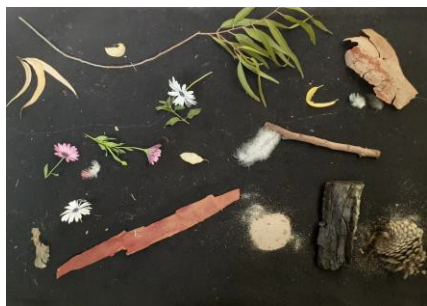


Despite a few change of dates with our nature program we did manage to go out a few weeks ago and visited the reserve and pine tree walk next to kinder. The children enjoyed their time on BoonWurrung Country and we had lots of fun, observing nature, looking closely at biik (land), balancing and finding a puddle or two to splash in. We listened and looked for waang (the crow), looked closely at the fungi and berries on the trees and noticed the trees swaying in the wind and small raindrops and puddles. We explored up and down the sides of the walk and noticed how slippery and steep it was in parts. We had lots of muddy hands in no time.



*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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pushing it. It didn't take long to fill it with different sized sticks, twigs and even a couple of pinecones for the fire the children want at kinder in the coming weeks. What the children also noticed in the pine tree walk was a lot of rubbish! So much had been dropped and left; bottles, glass, chip wrappers and even bricks and other building material waste. We had lots of discussions with the children and they shared their thoughts on the harm that it could do to the biik and animals. We talked about being safe and didn't have tongs we decided that the children should tell the adults and that they would collect the rubbish this time.



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Before heading back to kinder we also found the big hill near the skate park. The children had a great time on the hill. Some watched peers first, held hands with others and staff orwalked. In only a short time they had built their confidence in navigating the hill, running up and down. As their confidence grew so did their speed and enjoyment of taking on the challenge and succeeding. We had to not only traverse the uneven terrain and steep, slippery slopes but we also had to watch out for others and make sure we were being safe.

When we got back to kinder we decided to read the story Benny Bungarra's Big Bush Clean Up. It was sad when the animals in the story had to be rescued from the rubbish. We talked about how we were all Benny's who had helped to clean up the biik today and the children are keen to collect rubbish again soon. They are learning to take action and are showing empathy and care for the biik and mother earth.

A few weeks later we got to have the fire the children have been asking for all term!. We had a wonderful session and spent the majority of time together at the fire. Kim our fire expert showed the children how to use flints and they had a chance to have a turn. She also managed to get the fire started in the damp conditions - well done Kim! After talking to the children about fire and safety at the fire pit, the children were encouraged to use their senses and smell the smoke, look at the flames and feel the heat. We even got to explore taste as we made toast and all got a yummy marshmallow.



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Next Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> June is the last day of Term 2 and we will be celebrating International Mud Day. We are asking families to join us for the last hour of the session in their clothes to get muddy with us! Mud Day began in 2009 when Nepal and Australia found a way to help all children and families across the world come together to feel closer together and with the earth. Mud Day is about a sense of community and fun. It is a wonderful way to let go, have fun and be messy with your bubups. So come and slide, jump, sit, lay, hop, splash, paint, throw, splat and mould with us.



THANKS, JILL

### Dates for the Diary!

- Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June - International Mud Day- families join us at 10am in their mud gear!
- Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July First Day of Term 3



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