The Community Place Kindergarten Newsletter

MARCH 2016

With Term 1 (and a quarter of the year!) almost over, it's time to reflect on what we've achieved so far and what excitements are yet to come.

For some, it has been a big achievement to happily say goodbye to their parent and to feel secure and comfortable in a new environment, with new adults, new routines and be part of a new, large group.

For others, kindergarten this year has been discovering new ways to explore, create, interact, listen, collaborate, solve problems, challenge themselves and communicate thoughts, ideas and frustrations.

It has been lovely to receive positive feedback from parents about how their children are enjoying kindergarten and their learning here. Parents are encouraged to be involved in what we do and are welcome to contribute to our program and learning, so please let us know your ideas. Please send any feedback so we can follow on with an interest or idea.

Following on from our discussions after our fire drill and his visit to the Emergency Services helicopter base, Ollie has asked his dad, a paramedic, to come and talk to the group and show some of the equipment he uses.

Of course, there could be a time when parents have a concern about something at kindergarten. Like any organisation, The Community Place has a *Grievance Policy.* Parents are encouraged to contact me about any concern so the matter can be discussed and satisfactorily resolved as quickly as possible.

That all the centre's policies and procedures are available on The Community Place's website? These are available for your ready reference at any time.

CONTENTS

Parents are most welcome to come and spend time with us. There are no jobs to do and time you have to stay. Please feel free to contribute some of your skills or hobbies – story reading, music, making or fixing things, cooking and so on – or just enjoy being with your child and his/her friends.

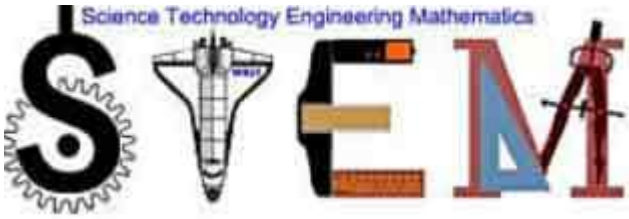
As the activities and resources are set up for kindergarten children, the environment has hazards for younger children. It is best if you can have your toddler cared for at home.

Please put your name down on the list by the sign-in book and talk to me about any exciting activities you would like to do when you come!

Please remember that we are committed to and respect the privacy of all children. This includes photos. As parents have not given permission for other parents to take and distribute photos of their child, if you are taking photos when you are here, please ensure that ONLY your child is in the photo.

Once distributed, an image can be available to many people for many years to come. What seems cute at age four can be fodder for cyber bullies at age fourteen. Some families can have legal reasons for protecting their child's image.

Jaimie Sutton (Brody's mum) has put a list beside the sign-in book if parents want to include their contact details on a Class List.



Embedded in our learning this year will be **Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM)** concepts.

On February 29, I attended the *Little Scientists* workshop at The University of Newcastle on *Exploring Water.* Engaging with scientific exploration in the program occurs daily.

Recently, some children saw a rainbow. From that we looked at how some colours mixed together to make other colours. Children have experienced this through water painting, eye dropper painting, easel painting, playdough, finger paint and having the colours mixed in bottles. March 23 is the Indian/Nepalese festival of Holi[1], which is sometimes described as a carnival of colours – a perfect way to celebrate the end of a colourful term!

Encouraging children to think about what might happen during/after a scientific experiment supports their ability to hypothesise, to understand that we do not always know the answer, that it's not always a competition to be right and that sometimes more questions arise.

This was evident when we were mixing colours. I asked what would happen when I mixed blue and yellow. One child said 'Green', another said 'Pink' and another thought 'Purple'. I offered 'Maybe the blue will be on the bottom and the yellow on top?' No one was sure about that one, so we mixed – and green was the result.

I did, however, get some oil. I put blue in the bottle and then the oil which floated on top. 'What will happen this time when I add the yellow? Will the yellow stay on top or mix with the blue at the bottom to make green?' Some thought the former; others the latter; some didn't express an opinion (as their first experience with this type of thinking, some children are either not used to expressing an opinion or are afraid that they will be 'wrong' and choose not to commit – hopefully all children will engage with this thinking as the year progresses as it opens possibilities across the learning spectrum). What happened? What do you think?

Three- and four-year-olds will not understand the concept of density and polarity of fluids after one experiment, however as the year progresses and we experience more and more examples of how the world works, understanding from this engagement will emerge.

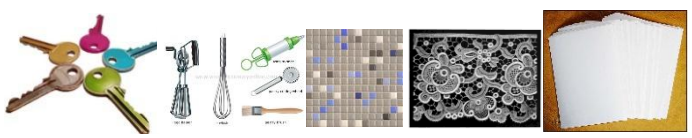
After Ollie showed us his rescue helicopter the other day, we talked about how the winch is used. This has led on to how pulleys work and I will bring some in for children to work with.

On our Exploration Table we have bottle caps of various colours and sizes. Most are plastic; some are metal. Children use these for sorting according to their main attribute and making patterns. These are foundation mathematical skills.

Many everyday items and activities can be made into learning experiences, even pegging clothes on the line (How do pegs work? How does the water get out of clothes? Where does the water go? Can you see it?)

Perhaps one day the children here will be leaders in their fields and making great contributions to the world like some of those recently here at the World Science Festival (http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/scienceshow/big-ideas-from-the-world-science-festival/7225886).

f you can collect bottle tops or lids to add to our collection, please bring them in and put them in the container by the sign-in book. Children can also explore other items such as old keys and locks, kitchen tools, tiles, fabrics and more. Also, we use cardboard and paper for painting, drawing and other activities. Wherever possible, we seek sustainable options for our resources**.** If your workplace discards paper of any size or type that would be suitable for use here, please let me know.



[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holi

Calendar

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Mar 21 Harmony Day	22	23 Last day Term 1	24	25 Good Friday
28 Easter Monday	29 EASTER BREAK	30 EASTER BREAK	31	April 1
4 EASTER BREAK	5 EASTER BREAK	6 EASTER BREAK	7	8
11 First day Term 2	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25 Anzac Day	26	27	28	29

School Holiday Activities

The Brisbane City Council provides a wide range of activities at libraries, parks and other spaces. Some are free. http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/whats-on/featured/school-holiday-activities-for-kids#/?i=5

The State Library of Queensland has free activities on Thursdays (http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on/calendar).

Current activities at the Queensland Museum are at http://www.qm.qld.gov.au/Learning+Resources/Kids+and+Families#.Vupo0fl97IU.

At the Queensland Art Gallery, a number of interactive artwork experience are on offer (https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/kids/kids-apt)

Brisbane Kids (http://www.brisbanekids.com.au/school-holiday-activities-qld/) provides activities and day trips.

Reverse Garbage at Woolloongabba has some workshops for older children (http://www.reversegarbageqld.com.au/news/easter-school-holidays-workshops).

From Early Childhood Australia's WebWatch:

Australian Early Development Census

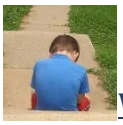
The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) is conducted every three years to measure how children have developed by the time they start full-time school. The 2015 results have just been published and provide data on more than 300 000 children.

The new statistics show that more than one in five Australian children is vulnerable in at least one area of their development and one in 10 is vulnerable in at least two areas at the time they start school. Read the full report here.

Queensland University of Technology research has shown that children who soothe themselves back to sleep from an early age adjust to school better https://www.qut.edu.au/news/news?news-id=102587. Dr Kate Williams' research *Early childhood profiles of sleep problems and self-regulation predict later school adjustment* was published in the *British Journal of Educational Psychology.*

ParentsNext program to begin in April

The Federal Department of Employment has announced a new initiative to assist parents with young children to prepare for future employment. The ParentsNext program will provide practical assistance, helping parents to access support services such as TAFE, training providers and employment services.



Why are boys twice as likely to repeat?

James Cook University (JCU) researcher, Robyn Anderson has recently published a paper entitled *Grade repetition risk for boys in early schooling in Queensland, Australia.* She notes that number of reasons for, on average, twice as many boys repeating a grade in the early years.

Most reasons relate to the concept of 'readiness'. School readiness attributes include cooperation, obedience and diligence. Girls are more likely to show these attributes.

The article notes that repetition of grades in the early years has no measureable effect on students' cognitive development or later academic achievement. It suggests that preschools should focus on the broader concept of 'transition' which 'focuses on children's strengths and provides contextually and culturally relevant programs that build continuity of children's experiences.'[2]

Wishing everyone a happy and safe holiday!

Alison Mackenzie

[2] *Early Words* Independent Education Union *Vol. 11 No.1* p3