Little Ducks Childcare Birkdale

July/August 2020

A note from your Centre Manager

Thanks for joining me for our latest edition of the newsletter! What a rollercoaster the last few months have been. Just like every roller coaster, there are ups, and downs, and round and rounds but we are finally nearing the end of the ride and realising that we have survived.

Over the past couple of months we have seen families, educators and services impacted by COVID -19, but with every storm comes a rainbow. I wanted to stop and take a moment to reflect on the positive things that have come over the past couple of months and celebrate some of the wonderful things we have seen.

Whilst our educators hours were reduced, this meant that through this challenging time, they were able to spend more time at home with their families, which is great for mental health and a better work life balance, something that we plan to continue to focus on post COVID-19 restrictions that are currently in place.

We have seen families spending more time together and connecting which is so important when times are tough. We have also seen early childhood education continue in the home environment with our families currently not attending through our home connect program.

The management teams of the 5 Little Ducks services, and head office team have come together to support each other, brainstorm strategies to support the teams and families and continue to thrive in uncertainty.

We have seen community services adapt to the restrictions on visitors and explore options to continue to support children and families through telehealth and online forums.

We have been able to keep peers connected with zoom playdates with their friends at home, so they don't lose the bond and connection they had when all playing and learning together in the centre environment each day.

Where we would usually have visits from the fire department, we were able to get them to film a video for the children so they could still learn about the service and what to do in a fire emergency.



And finally, the team has come together like they never have before. We have seen acts of selflessness as some of our team moved to other services to help out in their times of need, we have seen flexibility with rostering and hours, and most importantly, we have seen a beautiful sense of comradery blossom that will continue long after the restrictions are lifted.

It's important to remember the things that are beautiful!

Cassie Windt

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Upcoming Events!

July

Saturday 4th—**American Independence Day**

Friday 17th – **PJ Day!**
No need to get dressed today, come along in your PJ's for a cosy, chilled out day.

Friday 31st – **National Tree Day**
Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event.





August

Friday 7th—**Jeans for Genes Day**

Sunday 9th—**International Day of Worlds Indigenous Language**

Monday 10th – **Show holiday (observed)**
PUBLIC HOLIDAY—CENTRE CLOSED

Wednesday 12th—**Street Science Show**
Come along for an interactive show exploring the wonderous world of science



Monday 17th—Friday 21st—**Science Week** Following our science show, we will be exploring all things science!

Monday 24th – 28th - **Book Week**
Bring along your favourite story to share this week and dress up as your favourite book character on **Thursday 27th** The Book Week theme this year is curious creatures, wild minds

Community Events

Please note that NAIDOC week has been postponed until further notice this year, and Quandamooka Festival has been cancelled and will recommence next year.

All public community events have been cancelled or postponed until further notice. Please visit https://www.redland.qld.gov.au/info/20243/events_and_whats_on/575/events_calendar for more information

Policy Reviews

We value your input and feedback! The policies/procedures in review during July/August are:

- ◊ Child protection
- ◊ Collection and delivery of children
- ◊ Duty of care
- ◊ Emergency and evacuation
- ◊ Orientation—Children and Families
- ◊ Parent involvement and participation in the service
- ◊ Animal and pets on premises
- ◊ Record keeping
- ◊ Environment and sustainability

Ways that you can provide feedback are:

- ◊ In person, or over the phone
- ◊ As a reply to an email
- ◊ On Storypark

YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

Educator Spotlight ...

Miss Jelissa!

Miss Jelissa joined the Little Ducks Birkdale team in January this year and took over as our inspirational educational leader. In April she made the transition and leant her wealth of knowledge to the Annerley centre to assist during COVID and we have missed her immensely! We look forward to her return in mid-July.



Infant Mental Health

When it comes to children's mental health, things are never black and white.

It's easier to understand children's mental health through risk and protective factors. The relationship between these two factors can influence mental health in a substantial way.

In other words, your goal as a parent or carer in promoting your child's mental health is to reduce risk factors while increasing protective factors. This strategy is known to have a positive effect on children's mental development.

Let's try to understand the influence risk and protective factors can have to your child's wellbeing.

Understanding risk and protective factors

Environmental factors play an important part in your children's development (both physical and mental).

As complex as the relationship between risk and protective mental health factors can be, it's important to understand one simple rule. Risk factors increase the likelihood of mental health difficulties while protective factors balance out the risks for mental health difficulties.

How can you identify these two types of risks in your own family environment?

Let's take a look at some their characteristics and a few examples...

- **Mental health risk factors** are the liabilities in your child's environment. They can increase the chance of mental health difficulties down the line. These may be specific events that threaten your child's emotional or social development. They may include events like:

- Family conflict or separation
- Parents or carers suffering from mental health difficulties
- Experiencing natural disasters, stressful events, trauma or abuse
- The lack of social support such as a supportive family and close friends

Sometimes these risk factors can seem out of a parent's or carer's control. The best solution whenever struggling with these events is to ask for help. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength and the first step to recovery. There are so many great organisations that are not only helpful but also willing to give a hand.

Tip: Addressing risk factors as early as possible can have a tremendous influence on your child's mental and physical wellbeing.

Mental health protective factors encourage a stable environment for your child. Protective factors can balance out the risks, offering you a certain amount of control over the prevention of mental health difficulties. They help build a family environment that nurtures resilience. Resilience is the ability to bounce back and recover from life's difficulties. Protective factors include:

- A stable and warm home environment
- Supportive parents or carers
- Ambition to overcome life challenges
- Supportive community: family, close friends and neighbours
- Routine and consistency

Infant Mental Health—Continued

Knowing how mental health risk and protective factors can influence your child's mental health can help parents in a number of ways. They can plan and support those resources that improve their child's wellbeing.

Parents can focus on creating a supportive family environment for their children. A warm home environment can increase your children's sense of belonging and connection, which can protect children from emotional vulnerabilities.

Try to assist your child's social and emotional development. Initiate activities that promote a healthy development and celebrate developmental milestones. This will strengthen the bond with your child. Most of the time, strong family relationships promote healthy emotional development.

How can parents and carers promote their child's mental health?

Understanding the factors that influence your child's well being is the first step in promoting your child's mental health.

Finding practical ways to do it is the next step.

How can you find practical ways to promote their mental health? Here are a few effective ways you can try…

- Teach and help your child to understand, express and manage their feelings. It will help them create healthy coping mechanisms;
- Talk about your child's feelings and try to understand and respect them. This will create a strong bond between you and your child, which will help them feel safe and protected;
- You can help your child to cope with difficult situations by being supportive;
- Teach and help your child to understand stress, loss and grief are normal emotions we all go through in life;
- Try to create and maintain routines, as this will create a consistent environment that can help your child feel safe;
- Create and maintain a supportive relationship with close family members, it will create a secure environment for your child;
- Encourage and initiate activities that stimulate your child's social and emotional skills, such as expressing and managing their emotions. Be on the lookout for fun and interesting ways to stimulate their emotional development;
- Look for opportunities to build partnerships and relationships with other parents and carers to support your child;
- Observe your child's behaviours and whenever you notice concerning tendencies, don't hesitate to ask for specialised help.

Mental health difficulties can seem overwhelming and scary. The good news is that a supportive and stable environment can go a long way when it comes to supporting your child's wellbeing.

It's important to be involved in your child's development and pay attention to their tendencies and behaviours. Whenever there's cause for concern don't hesitate to ask for specialised help. It can make a big difference in your family's life.

Remember, struggles are meant to be shared.

Nursery









It is hard to believe that we are at the start of July already! So much development and learning has occurred with the Nursery children since we last caught up. Rhys, Zan, Oliver, Finn and Adelynn are standing up while holding on to structures, and Joshua and Hezekiah are now both walking everywhere. Dakoda is so close to sitting up unassisted, and Allira is comfortable in the large yard, playing with Skyler. What amazing leaps the children have made in the last two months.

The children appear to be very settled in Nursery, even those who have been away for a while, and it is so lovely to have back Oliver, Rhys, and Dakoda. We have also been very lucky to have the Senior Nursery children in the room, engendering it becoming a 0 – 2 years room, which brings with it many extra activities and challenges from our older friends, and their lovely company, as well as Miss Tara and Miss Diane being in the room.

The children have developed their interests, as I have watched their favourite activities, and have incorporated both this, and the facet of development parents would like to see, which is the question on the white board.

In June, we celebrated Reconciliation Week, which encompassed the children painting in the colours of the three flags of Australia, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islands, and Australian. Rock art was also enjoyed as the children painted the rocks, the tables, structures in the small yard, and their hands, which was very artistic, and displayed a sense of agency. We also interacted, talking about Aboriginal symbols on rocks, cards, and displays on the wall, as well as playing in an Aboriginal setting with the “gunyah” the campfire, which the dolls sat around, and many play Australian animals. We all sat in the yarning circle and recited our Acknowledgement to Country, playing Aboriginal sticks, rain sticks, and drums.

On World Environment Day, we decided to enjoy the outdoors, having our meals out there, as well as our sleep. As the Sustainability module for June was “children appreciating nature” we have been engendering the children enjoying the sunshine, the breeze, and all that nature has to offer, collecting natural elements such as leaves, twigs, and rocks in our basket.

Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, 8th – 12th June saw us researching paths to ensure that all the children in Nursery’s needs are being met, and that we are understanding more deeply their insecurities, especially around separation anxiety, and that we are filling their love cup to overflowing.

I trust this Newsletter finds you well and healthy, and that your life is beginning to return to normal after the turmoil of Covid-19 and its inherent consequences. I hope it is over soon, and that we will have all the children back in Nursery, and our beloved Kayla as well. I’m sure everyone is missing her as much as me.

Debbie





Senior Nursery



Well haven't these last few months been a strange time for us all with many adaptions to our environment and world needed. These changes have seen our senior nursery friends combine in the nursery room which provided many opportunities for learning and milestones to be achieved. The senior nursery children took on roles of leadership and expressed care for others as they began to assist the younger children with our routine tasks like feeding, cleaning up after lunch and putting our dishes into the washing up, wiping our faces and washing our hands correctly and manipulating our blocks and outdoor equipment. They engaged with the babies and used their verbal communication to encourage the children to attempt their tasks with them. It was a wondrous thing to behold, just to see how well we adapted to change and to see how their learning progressed in such a short amount of time.



Our sustainability module has seen us investigating our natural environment and all it encompasses. The children engaged in a nature scavenger hunt at home and brought in their collections to share with their peers. Together we sat on the mat and investigated what everyone had discovered. There were various flowers, berries, rocks, leaves and feathers. Of course, the children's favourite part is looking for Barry (our local butcher bird) outside during play and meal times and feeding him some of our crumbs. The children get such excitement about being able to watch him. Because he comes so close we are able to study his features and see his eyes, wings, beak and feathers. We have also laid on the grass and watched the clouds in the sky as well as watching the rain fall and puddles from on wet days. Throughout these experiences the children have been able to extend their respect for our natural environment and better understand how to care for it.





We have recognised National Sorry Day and reconciliation week and further developed our respect for diversity and Australia's traditions and background. Throughout these weeks we explored the cultural aspects through imaginative play as a yarning circle with natural elements was set up reflective of the indigenous peoples, dancing and listening to traditional indigenous music and interpreting the indigenous flags through art and using earthy tones to paint our own creations. We also read the book 'sorry sorry' and set up provocations for learning in the outdoor environment.

Moving forward we can't wait to welcome everyone back and see what you have been up to while at home. We are continuing to foster development towards the children achieving their developmental goals. Love from Tara and Diane.





Toddler



What a wonderful time we have been having in the Toddler Room! Just recently we have acknowledged Reconciliation Week. As part of this learning, the children took part in decorating their own squares of material which I took home and sewed together to create a story blanket. The story blanket symbolically is a warm and safe place for the children to come together in unity, where everyone can be themselves and share their stories or listen to the stories of others. The Toddler's have been gathering on the story mat every day and sharing their stories with each other. It is so wonderful to see them sharing their voice with our group!

Last month we had our Maintenance Man, Ian, visit and this sparked a huge interest in the Toddler room around our community. The children have begun to explore different roles within our community and what they do. Some of the rolls we have explored are how Ian fixes things that have broken and how Fire Fighter's keep us safe from harm. As part of our Sustainability topic, Reduce Reuse Recycle, Miss Kerri kindly donated an old boat to the centre which now resides in the sand pit. This then extended on the Toddler's learning even further by exploring how boats are used within our community. Miss Chloe has been n reaching out to people within our community to find information, photos and flyers to help with our knowledge building around this topic.





Along with the Sustainability topic, the Toddler's have been encouraged to recycle their food packing from their lunch boxes which we have been adding to the room for loose parts play. The imaginations have been running wild, creating some wonderful, magical pieces. We have seen fruit tubs worn as hats, hand cream made from used tubs and spoons as well as lots of stacking with cups! Thank you very much to our families that have kindy donated items for our loose parts play as well!

As July moves closer, we are seeing some old faces return to the Toddler room which is very exciting for us! I can't wait for the day that all our friends return to Little Ducks to join in learning with us.



Miss Chloe



Junior Kindy



Wow I can't believe we are nearing the end of June, this year is flying by! We are so looking forward to welcoming back all of our families in July and are sure that all of the children will be pleased to be reunited with their friends!

Lately, we have a large interest and involvement that has continued from our May sustainability topic, reduce, reuse, and recycle. With the help of our Junior friends, family, and educators, we have been able to collect many recycled items to implement in various parts of our room. This has proved to be great additions in our room, and we have seen our junior kindy friends using these resources in very creative ways for learning and to strengthen their skills.

Now as the weather has been cooling down, we have been able to take advantage of this and spend longer periods of time in our outdoor environment enjoying these beautiful days! We bundle ourselves up and head out to explore the playground, take in the beautiful nature all around us. We have been especially keen on watching the 'rainbow birds' that we see flying through the trees above our playground. We have been incorporating many natural resources into our experiences that has opened up many discussions around the Quandamooka country that our centre is built on.

A huge achievement for our Junior Kindy friends this month has been learning their last names! We have been playing various name games at our group time and can proudly say that all of our friends can say their first and last names when asked! Some of our friends have been showing their senses of humour as they play cheeky little jokes on us and say funny last names! Its wonderful to see the children sharing their humour with us.

Our Moove and Groove topic for this month has been galloping, this has been particularly enjoyed by our room as playing 'horses' is very popular, we have been able to incorporate this into our program by playing "gallop little horses" and even using the sticks in the yard to make our own ponies to gallop on!

Exploring height has been a focus for our room this month. We have created our own height chart and look forward to seeing how much we have grown in the coming months! We have been exploring this early mathematical concept by introducing comparative language to the children such as taller and shorter, bigger and smaller there have been many investigations around this.



Thanks for another great month

Miss Teesh and Miss Rylee.





Kindergarten



YURA, all our lovely families and friends. First up I just want to acknowledge and honour every single one of our young learners, absolutely WOW. As I reflect on the last few months, I feel immensely proud of them all. With little to no warning everything changed almost instantly in a short period of time. Despite this all, still our young champion learners continued to get up and show up, navigating their way through these constant ever-changing waves. We sure are missing the presences of our other kindy friends and often speak about how we would all see each other very soon.

A key theme that has occurred throughout this term was CARING. How we can care for ourselves, friends, everyone around us, Planet Earth, Animals, plants and for the First people/ Traditional owners of Australia.

We inquired into these by asking, thinking, collaborating, predicting, experimenting, and researching into what these looks, sounds, and feels like.

Through reading books, watching short videos, and putting our working theories to test in role playing and self-initiated activities individually and with our friends.

We learnt about how we all have a role and responsibility in helping care for our earth. This can look like the 3 Rs' reducing, reusing, and recycling. Learners can identify what the recycling and litter symbol looks like, during eating times they are often seen looking for these signs on their food packages discussing with their friends the sign and which bin it needs to go in. If they cannot find the symbols, they then ask themselves if it is one of the following, cardboards, paper, steel, plastic bottle, or glass. Also, during eating times, we ask around which one the 3 Rs are we doing and how. "I use the same container for my yoghurt its reducing cause it's not making lots of rubbish" ... "I'm recycling cause this wrapper has recycling sign on it so I will put it in the yellow bin". We have all looked at what happens if we keep making lots of rubbish instead of recycling. "Our earth will be filled with lots of rubbish and take up lot of the land there will be no more space"



Through our ongoing learning journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture and people we discover the importance of taking care of the land ,animals, plants and these will then take care of us by giving us food , getting rid of CO2(the bad smoke)to protect us and gives us oxygen we need to breathe and stay alive.

Kindergarten





Taking care of ourselves looks like good hygiene practices , knowing how our incredible body systems works ,how to fuel and nourish them to be strong and healthy .We looked and talked about our immune system to see how our amazing bodies works hard to protect us and how we can make this strong by practicing good hygiene ,resting/sleep, eating healthy food , drinking lots of water and exercising. Co regulation and regulations using the zones as well as vital values such as respect/empathy is a topic that will be on going throughout the year as vast amount of research shows that a strong social and emotional foundation in early childhood powerfully impacts children's later positive attitudes and behaviours, academic performance career path, and adult health outcomes.

As part of our program teaching children to regulate their emotions we have encouraged the children each day to rest their bodies. We talk constantly about how rest or a sleep when we are feeling sad or a bit cranky is a great way of restoring our energy which then allows us to have a calm and enjoyable afternoon. As educators we have thought about and reflected on what rest time looks like. This is enabling us to ensure each child's needs during this time are met. Some children still require a sleep while others respond well to a rest. Lily one day suggested we have a rest/sleep outside. We have began doing this more often as research suggests sleeping outdoors can having many educational values as well as help us with our emotional wellbeing.

As well as looking after our mental wellbeing we have recently began a letter and a number of the week project. Our children have responded so well to this and are lapping up this learning. Many of our class members are so ready to be challenged further with their literacy and numeracy learning and readily get involved in the activities. We create many fun activities that help children learn through play that they don't even realise they are learning. Each week we use concrete materials to create the letters and numbers and we have been listening to Jack Hartman letter songs. This has become an absolute favourite and many children request it along with the jolly phonics songs. Emma told me she sang it at home to mum and dad too. Great to hear the children are sharing their learning in the home environment. Why not check out Jack Hartman songs at home!

We are all counting down the days and waiting excitedly for all our Little Ducks families return to be together again learning, growing, and most importantly continuing to build friendships along with lots of fun, happy memories.







Move and Groove!



The Move and Groove focus for June has been galloping!
It has been wonderful to watch the children grow in this skill from the beginning of the month with many of the children starting off very unfamiliar to this movement pattern.
We began the month with discussing what galloping looks like with some demonstrations from our educators – keeping one leg at the front with the other trailing along.



Creating ponies out of some large sticks in the yard has been a popular way to practise this skill as well as some galloping races down the hills!
In the younger rooms the children have been working to build the foundational motor skills that they will one day further develop into galloping!
Next month we will be moving onto leaping and will introduce this to the children by a fun game of “crocodile, crocodile can we cross the river”, encouraging the children to leap to the other side of the river!

Sustainability Corner!



Over the past few months in sustainability, we have been focussing on the three R’s (reduce, reuse, recycle) and the children's connection to and respect for nature. We started with exploring the story of the rain fish, where children used litter they found to create their own version of the story.
There have been long periods of time spent in the outdoors learning to appreciate the little things that can often be missed. The Junior Kindy children watched a ladybug for the morning and it made its way across a log, the Kindergarten children used a hoola hoop to over several hours to track the progress an ant was making as it crossed the playground, carrying a sultana back to the garden, and there were mornings and afternoons spent laying on the ground, staring up at the clouds as the wind rustled through the leaves.

Over the coming months the attention will turn to the gardens as we start our planting for the Spring season, and celebrate national tree day. We are looking forward to working in partnership with Indigiscapes to make this happen. We will also look into native bug habitats and explore our eco-system, and assess how we are supporting the smaller creatures to survive and thrive in our environment.

