



REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL LINDFIELD NEWSLETTER



REDDAM
ELS

10th September 2021

Principal's Message

By Mrs Kath Boyd

"Why try to explain miracles to your children when you can just have them plant a garden." (Robert Brault)

As you enter the ELS via the top gate . . . cast your eyes straight ahead to the outdoor space on the right of the Administration Area. You'll see four large planter boxes that have been purchased on behalf of the Reddam Social Community by the fabulous Carolina (\$2 & \$4 Parent), delivered by Carolina's husband Michal and constructed/filled with soil by our wonderful gardener Rob. Over the next few months our Eco Garden will start to take shape . . . how magnificent! Thank you Carolina for your vision and perseverance – what a champion!

Whether they're sprinkling seeds, watering the plants, tending to the Worm Farm or raking leaves, **gardening** is a fun and fruitful activity for babies, toddlers and preschoolers. It's not just plants that grow in the garden – it's children too. They develop and learn while getting their hands dirty, and here are some good reasons to get them gardening:

- 1. Gardening develops children's physical skills in a fun and productive way:** Young children practice locomotor skills, body management skills and object control skills while they move from one place to the other carrying tools, soil and water. In addition, children hone their fine motor skills when sowing seeds, weeding, picking flowers, pouring water and using a trowel; and they experience sensory stimulation when touching things like damp soil, velvety petals and squirmy worms.
- 2. Gardening encourages children to try new foods and eat healthily:** Little ones learn about nutrition and where fresh food comes from. Plus, they're more inclined to try a new food, like spinach or basil, if they've helped grow it.
- 3. Gardening teaches children life skills:** Children learn how to focus on the task at hand, follow directions, be patient, and communicate and cooperate with fellow gardeners. They also learn how to make connections, such as understanding the cause and effect of plants needing water to survive. They take responsibility when caring for plants, and gardening provides opportunities to embrace new challenges, like learning to un-pot a plant or use a rake.
- 4. Gardening is educational - an opportunity for reasoning and discovery.** Children learn about the science of plants, animals, weather, the environment, nutrition and simple construction through gardening. The garden is also a place where children can practice their intellectual skills such as remembering and analysing information and predicting outcomes. For example, children can recall how the soil was prepared for planting, explain differences between plants and answer questions like, *"Is there enough sunlight here for the tree to grow?"* Gardening enhances children's literacy skills, as they learn the names of different plants and start to read words on seed packets; and children also get to think creatively by finding ways to plan, produce and problem-solve.
- 5. Gardening makes children feel good:** This productive activity provides a bonding experience between grown-up and child and it builds youngsters' self-confidence as they learn new skills, achieve goals and enjoy the food or flowers they've grown. Gardening also encourages a love of nature and provides a positive outdoors experience. Half the pleasure of gardening is to commune with nature, green plants, fresh air and gentle sunlight, which leaves children feeling more happy and less stressed.

Principal's Message Continued...

By Mrs Kath Boyd

Children thrive on new information and experiences, so parents can introduce youngsters to the wonderful world of gardening by:

- (Post Covid restrictions) Visiting parks, botanic gardens and community gardens, attending Open Garden days, going to plant and farmers' markets, and exploring the gardens of relatives and friends.
- Flipping through gardening books and magazines together, pointing out pictures, explaining interesting facts and answering youngsters' questions.
- Setting aside part of the garden, balcony or windowsill for children to grow something in, and encouraging young children to dig in the dirt, plant seeds, water plants and harvest produce.
- Explaining where food comes, how plants grow and what creatures, like bees and worms, get up to.
- Engaging with the family garden and growing plants that are interesting to children.

When it comes to young children, fast-growing, large-sized and sensory plants will really appeal. They love plants that: look colourful (bright sunflowers and marigolds); feel nice (fuzzy lavender and gooey aloe vera); taste good (sweet carrots and strawberries); smell beautiful (aromatic mint and jasmine) and sound interesting (grasses or bamboo that rustle in the breeze). There are lots of ways to make gardening fun, and whether you have a sprawling vegetable patch or just enough space for a succulent, here are a variety of **gardening projects** for little people:

- Grow a [Grass Head](#)
- [Decorate a flower pot](#) and plant some seeds
- Create a [fairy garden](#)
- Plant a [bean teepee](#) or [sunflower house](#)
- Make a [scarecrow](#)
- Set up an [egg shell seed-growing experiment](#)
- Build a [worm farm](#) together
- Grow seeds in unusual planter boxes, e.g. made from [LEGO](#), out-grown gumboots or an [old toy truck](#)

Gardens are exciting and enriching places, but in between patting down soil and pulling carrots, it's important to keep children's **safety** in mind. To prevent garden mishaps, adults should:

- Choose age-appropriate tools - those that are lightweight, easy-to-handle & correctly-sized for the child
- Store equipment and tools safely
- Keep sprays and fertilisers out of reach, and instead of using chemicals, focus on gardening organically
- Secure fences and gates
- Supervise very young children and toddlers around buckets of water
- Provide shade in summer, e.g. by gardening under shade cloths or umbrellas
- Dress children for the conditions, e.g. using hats, sunscreen, wet weather gear and closed shoes
- It's also important to look out for any prickles or stingers, and wash their hands well after gardening.

Enjoy this glorious, Spring weather.

Pictured above: 1E gardening experience. Pictured below: Charlotte (3R) in the newly constructed teepee.



“There is peace and tranquillity that can be found in the country.” (Unknown)

Week 7 in 1R was all about **Farm Animals**, inspired by the song *Old Macdonald Had a Farm*. This week was the first week of spring. Each day at the provocation table, the children entered into the farmyard and barn. The animals that we can find on our farm are cows, horses, ducks, sheep, dogs and many more. As we continued to appreciate our farm animals, the children were offered to explore the farm animal small world which supports the children to explore, pretend play and also stimulate their senses with hay, fresh flowers and leaves. The children have also been engaging themselves in some hands-on activities such as the train track blocks and farm animal puzzles to practise their problem solving and hand- eye coordination skills.

‘Where does Milk come from?’- To answer this question, we watched a short clip about where milk comes from and how it gets from the cow to our fridge. To follow on with this, the children were invited to our little cow milking experience, each having a turn as if they were being a dairy farmer. We filled a glove with white paint and held it over the jar, then we poked a tiny hole in the glove. This experience challenged the children's fine motor and social skills, as they needed to take turns, and use their fingers and hands to squeeze.

Another activity inviting the children was a farm pond experience, where they could see a tray filled with water and fish shapes. The children were holding the fishnets to catch as many fish as they could.

During our language and literacy group time, we read various books that focused on farm animals such as *At the farm* by Gali Weiss, *A Squash and a Squeeze* by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler and *Farmyard Hullabaloo* by Giles Andreae. Our song of the week was *Old Macdonald Had a Farm* and we incorporated some animal puppets while singing. The children are familiar with this song and did a good job by mimicking the sounds of the animals.

In our creative experience, the children were offered corn, which can be grown on farms and are also very tasty! The children rolled the corn on the paper and used the colour yellow for colour recognition.

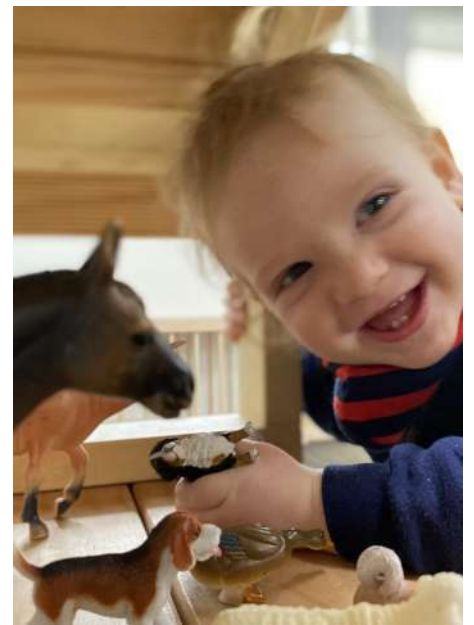
Next week we will be focusing on **Gardening and our Natural Environment**.

Hope you have a lovely weekend!

Natalie, Dori, May and Suki



Stage 1R: Farm Animal Creative Play



Stage 1R: Milking and Corn Art



“Water is the driving force of all nature.” (Leonardo Da Vinci)

Continuing our exploration of the Earth, this week was all about learning the various **Bodies of Water**. The children investigated the water cycle and learned how the water on our planet evaporates into the clouds before falling as raindrops. Water sustains life. It is very important that we teach the children how vital it is for their bodies and the environment.

To give children the full understanding of this topic, we prepared varying small world displays of a river, pond, and ocean. We explored sustainable practices such as using recycled sushi soy containers as a school of fish, some natural loose parts such as pebbles, dried moss, real grass, toy figurines and natural coloured fabrics to create an imaginary display of these bodies of water. These set-ups also allowed the children to not only increase their social interactions alongside their peers, but also improve their fine motor skills as they used fishing rods, fishing nets and their fingers to manipulate all the elements available in the set-up.

We also offered the 1E children to extend their learning about this topic through a rain cloud experiment using shaving foam, blue dye and dropper. Demonstrating the dynamic of a raindrop allowed them to have an introduction of how raindrops fall on Earth. A cognitive challenge of sorting fishes according to their colours was also participated in by the group. Using the recycled sushi fish soy containers filled up with different coloured dyes improved children's basic counting and at the same time increased their mathematical skills of sorting and matching.

Our creative way of extending learning about bodies of water was through frozen coloured water painting. This activity allowed the children to increase their sense of touch and creativity in mixing colours and making patterns on their papers.

During our outdoor play, we improved on our following instructions and listening skills through play. Using bean bags, we encouraged the children to practice their throwing skills against the fence and aiming at a target spot. We also had more fun outside enjoying a wonderful drawing experience of using jumbo chalk sticks as we practiced our hand-eye coordination and wrist manipulation skills scribbling on a piece of paper. So much fun for today, learning and building, beautiful interactions amongst each other!

Thank you all for taking the time to read and enjoy this week's school's experiences both in the classroom and online learning!

Charity, Heather, Fatima, May, Lizzie and Kai



Stage 1E: Exploring Bodies of Water (Part 1)



Stage 1E: Exploring Bodies of Water (Part 2)



***“No great artist ever sees things as they really are.
If he did, he would cease to be an artist.” (Oscar Wilde)***

The benefits of **art** for children include problem-solving abilities, creativity, connection, understanding and many more. Art is naturally linked to creativity, an attribute that is increasingly being touted as one of the most important factors for the success of individuals. The truth is that art is vital, if somewhat intangible, and that if children engage in hands-on art activities, they learn much better in all disciplines. So this week, our little **artists** used a range of open-ended experiences and resources to grow and develop to their full potential. When they explore art ideas, they are testing possibilities and working through challenges, much like a scientist who experiments and finds solutions. They constantly ask themselves questions and make their own assessments, while art is also teaching them that a problem may have more than one answer. Instead of following specific rules or directions, the child's brain becomes engaged in the discovery of “how” and “why”. Even when experimenting or learning how to handle art materials effectively, children are solving challenges and coming up with new ways to handle unexpected outcomes.

2R seemed to enjoy exploring ice by painting and creating a rainbow of melted colours. The vibrant little swirls of colours were so magical. Another experience involved them painting salt using watercolour paints and pipettes, and observing as the colours spread and absorbed by the grains of salt. There were some activities for 2R to challenge their creativity such as creating a flower garden in magic sand-based trays, creating artistic landscapes using gems and flowers on synthetic grass and manipulating green and blue slime to create some beautiful natural landscapes using natural loose parts. All these experiences were to recreate children's personal experiences and fostered their imagination, language skills, as well as fine motor skills. The freedom to manipulate different materials in an organic and unstructured way allows children for exploration and experimentation.

One of our artworks involved children painting using magnets and metal pieces and the best part of this project was learning about the science of magnets while painting. Moreover, our little artists created art using natural brushes and observed textures, lines and patterns they made when painting. The beauty of process art is that we are not trying to achieve a specific result and that makes it a valuable learning opportunity for children to develop their creativity.

Our aim is to emphasise as many children as possible to enjoy art making in their lives! There is nothing more magnificent than watching a child or anyone for that matter flourish and discover themselves and the world around them through being creative and making art in all its glorious forms.

We wish you a happy weekend!

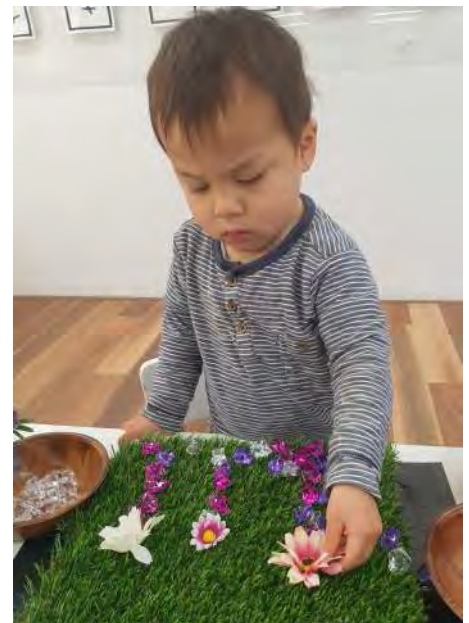
Sara, Manoela, Margaret, May, Angelica and Suki



Stage 2R: Up-and-coming Artists



Stage 2R: Inspired by Nature



“The clearest way into the universe is through a forest wilderness” (John Muir)

This week we went on a visual journey to explore the **Rainforest ecosystem**. Rainforests are defined as dense forests with high amounts of annual rainfall that are often located in tropical regions. A wide variety of animals are found in the rainforest. Many of the animals have special adaptations that allow them to live in tropical conditions, but they would not survive outside of this ecosystem. Daily sensory, art and play-based activities were inspired by beautiful and colorful Rainforests. We invited the children to visit different layers of rainforests, in which we explored a diverse range of flora and fauna. Rainforest biomes offered our lovely children opportunities to observe diverse types of animals and their unique characteristics including birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects.

Narratives provide excellent means of assisting children in connecting their world with the world of others. Listening to narratives specially enhances children’s listening and speaking abilities as well as nurtures their memory, visualization and imagination that are foundations of creativity. Through a range of picture books, our children read the book *One Day on our Blue Planet In The Rainforest* by Ella Bailey. They were immersed and concentrated to listen to the story about the journey of a baby monkey finding his mother in different layers of a rainforest. Walking along with him in the colourful journey, the children developed their understanding about the animals living in different layers of rainforest and the habitat of the rainforest.

We read another amazing giant book called *Gwendolyn* by Juliette MacIver & Terri Rose Baynton. Our children listened attentively to the story of a penguin who lives in a jungle. This book offered us a revision of our previous focus of Antarctica. The children were curious about how a penguin can live in a hot and humid jungle. Following the adventure of Gwendolyn, we made a comparison between the colours and living things in different environments. At this age group, we highly focus on linguistic and literacy developments which are expressed when children exchange ideas and social interactions from their funds of knowledge during the group-time.

On the art table, we created our artwork by using different sizes of leaves. Each child chose colours according to their preferences. It was lovely to see our young artists' concentration to create their pieces of art. Especially, as we had experienced structured and guided name recognition and literacy, and through engaging in letter stones, the children amazed us by recognising not only the sounds and the sight of their letters but also their friends'. Small group focus has proven to be beneficial as the children learnt from both teachers and peers. The children sought their name letters with minimal assistance.

Enjoy your beautiful weekend!
Mia, Carina and Connie



Stage 2E: A Walk Through the Jungle



Stage 2E: Rainforest Inspired Art



"If you truly love Nature, you will find beauty everywhere." (Vincent Van Gogh)

Continuing our gaze on artists, this week we focus on **Vincent Van Gogh**, whose artwork is inspired by his natural surroundings and curiosities of the world. The children tapped into Van Gogh's love of nature through using real life sunflowers, while painting their own. For our focus artwork, we used many different methods of creating sunflowers and a 'Starry Night' scene. The use of foil, cue tips and paint encouraged the children to make swirls of colour and mix to make wonderful greens against a silver background. With our sunflower art, the children were given the opportunity to use forks and their fingers to create the sunflowers. When stuck, we referred the children to look at the real sunflowers which spurred them into creating masterpieces!

Our 'Morning Meetings' this week consolidated the children's understanding of **Auslan** key food words and learned more to add to their sign bank. The plethora of books read all contained aspects of Van Gogh's life through both fiction and nonfiction narratives. The real examples of his work allowed the children to see the styles he used and his preferred colour palettes. Through our continued journey of exploring Indigenous Perspectives, this week we talked about 'Respect', specifically the respect of our books. As we discussed this, the children stated that we have to "Look after them" and recognised the importance of books. We also looked at books in a holistic way as we went through the life-cycle of a book i.e. coming from trees. This again reiterated the importance of respecting books through respecting our natural environment.

In our small groups, we focused on letter-sounds through alphabet bingo and a much loved game of 'Kaboom'. As the children become more familiar with these games, the more they are able to facilitate the games themselves, they are needing less explicit instruction from educators and using more peer support. Another experience led by our educators was an 'I Spy' rhyming game, which encourages children to listen to words and find the rhyming words around them. This was a little more challenging but through educator guidance and peer learning, the children were able to persevere and engage in the experience enthusiastically.

Next week we will be looking at **Henri Matisse** and the wonderful world of collage!

Grace, Pa and Margaret



Stage 3R: Inspired by Van Gogh's Sunflowers



Stage 3R: Inspired by Van Gogh's Starry Night



“The animal is a conduit for learning to be human: some propose that it is only through the animal that we recognise our humanity.” (Jill Bone)

The sense of curiosity and delight that animals inspire in children is more than just a fascination; research has shown that building connections with the natural world helps children develop important skills such as empathy, responsibility and respect for our environment. Humans have an innate biological connection with animals, and a natural instinct to nurture and care for other living things. This affinity for the natural world is apparent when we observe children's excitement about animals and their strong desire to interact with them. A child's fascination with all things related to nature can present an important opportunity to develop important life skills.

This week in 3E, the children explored the world of **farm animals** and **domestic pets**. At group times, the children offered their knowledge and ideas about these animals. We discussed all the various animals you might have on a farm, what they eat, how they act and sound and how they are beneficial to humans. The children had to think about what animals they might have as a pet, who has a pet at home and what type of animal it is. Exploring our small world farmyard table and mini machinery sensory trays, the children displayed their knowledge and curiosity about farm life and the purpose of keeping certain animals. They were invited to create a cork painting sheep and an origami puppy at the creative table, while some engaged in letter tracing and exploring our literacy table with a focus on the letter 'd'. Tracing helps children refine their pre-writing skills and builds the foundation for drawing, writing letters and words.

There was lots of interest in mathematical concepts among the children this week, as they participated in various learning experiences involving shape sorting, memory games, sequencing, colour sorting and categorisation by size and height. Engaging in these learning experiences, the children were able to use critical thinking to solve problems and explore geometric shapes and patterns.

Next week, we dive straight into the big blue, as we explore the ocean and the animals that inhabit it. We will look at all the weird and wonderful life forms that make up this fascinating ecosystem that our planet so strongly depends on. We will continue to focus on our letter 'd' as the children familiarise themselves with the sound and formation on this focus letter.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Deb and Priya



Stage 3E: Fun on the Farm



**"A true depiction of the path of greatness is the Great Wall of China.
What if greatness lies at the other end?"** (Nana Kwesi Nyameaye)

As we continue our learning of our provocation, **The Living Planet**, each week we travel to a new destination, exploring the wonder of a continent through learning about its natural and man made environments. This week we arrived in **Asia**, where yet again, we were faced with many discoveries. How long is **The Great Wall of China**, why was it built and by whom? Why is the **Dead Sea** dead? Would you climb **Mount Everest**, the highest point on Earth? The children were fascinated to learn facts through historic and scientific evidence, and so our investigations began.

Educators were reminded of the Chinese Proverb *"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand"* as they observed the children's disposition towards their learning in the classroom, navigating and investigating their own learning through attentive engagement, while educators took a step back, allowing children to scaffold their learning. This was seen in children furthering their ongoing interests of building. A spark of the imagination inspired by **The Great Wall of China** saw children create long walls around the classroom, sparing limited space. Interesting facts learned were of the wall being built in several areas and joined together over time by various Emperors to protect the region, and the extraordinary length of the wall spreading over 20,000km's.

We continued our learning journey to the **Dead Sea**, exploring its unique history and features. The Dead Sea is not an actual sea, but a lake, formed by tectonic activity millions of years ago. The high salinity level of the water (34%) is due to its location in the desert, where the water evaporates more quickly than in the ocean. This high concentration of salt makes the water very dense, therefore humans can float in the water. This is an outcome we were intrigued to investigate further. A comparison of clear water versus salty water took place by children adding density in the form of table salt to the water. The sink or float experiment fascinated the children's thinking of what will float and will sink. Using small objects such as animal figurines, the weighing up of large or small, heavy and light, less or more created the conversations amongst children and educators.

We also looked at the unique animals native to **Asia**, such as pandas, Asian tigers, Asian elephants and orangutans. Sadly, some species of these animals are in danger of extinction due to human impact and global warming. The pandas for example have been clarified as endangered animals in the past, luckily due to awareness they are on the mend with numbers still remaining crucially low. The incorporation of these animals into our learning has been through an open ended art activity. The children chose from a broad range of materials and tools to create their own panda artworks.

Wishing you a lovely, relaxing weekend,
Veronika, Luan and Allegra



Stage 4R: Panda Pictures



Stage 4R: Asian Animals & Salt Water Experiment



“There is no such thing as a failed experiment, only experiments with unexpected outcomes.” (R. Buckminster Fuller)

This week, we explored **solids, liquids and gases**. We started with a discussion about what each of these mean during our morning group times. **Solids** keep a fixed shape and volume, can't be compressed easily and don't flow easily. **Liquids** take the shape of the container they are in, can't be compressed and flow easily. **Gases** take the shape and volume of their container, can be easily compressed and flow easily too.

We started an investigation into liquids after reading *Who Sank the Boat* by Pamela Allen. The children engaged with a 'sink or float' experience where they each received a sheet of foil and made a boat out of it. The children tested their foil boats in a container of water and placed marbles on top of their boat to see how many it could support before they sank. Some of the boats sank quite easily so the children made their second boats stronger so they could support up to 51 marbles!

Our next story was *Mr Archimedes' Bath* also by Pamela Allen. We read how a man was frustrated when the water always overflowed as he took a bath with his animals. Even though the bath was only filled a quarter high to begin with, the water kept rising as each animal got in. We discussed how a solid affects a liquid by taking up space. If the container the solid is in can't expand, the liquid has nowhere to go but up. The class conducted our own experiment with a jar of water, where we added wooden blocks to see how the water would rise to the rim of the jar. We also added a heavy bottle which made the water overflow and we tried adding marbles in our last attempt too.

Inspired by another story about experiments called *The Barnabus Project* by The Fan Brothers, we explored how water and oil cannot mix. First, some vegetable oil was poured into three jars and water was added on top. We watched as the water and the oil attempted to mix together, but then it separated into two distinct layers. The children wondered why the oil had floated to the top when it was poured in first? Even though water and oil are both liquids, the water is heavier than the oil, thus why it sinks to the bottom and the oil rises to the top. Food colouring was added to each jar and finally, alka seltzer tablets created a fizzy reaction very similar to a lava lamp. The children said the blue jar reminded them of waves in the ocean, the red jar was filled with volcanic lava and the green jar had bubbling monster slime in it.

Towards the end of the week, we conducted our final experiment with bicarbonate soda and vinegar. We already knew that they produce bubbles when combined, but they can also create a gas when trapped. Bicarb and vinegar were carefully placed inside a bottle and a balloon was quickly secured around the top. We watched the two ingredients fizz, create an invisible gas, and blow the balloon up.

What a busy week of scientific experiments in our classroom! Next week we will explore different ways to use paper, including paper mâché, origami and collage artworks.

Stay safe and well!
Lauren and Connie



Stage 4E: Scientific Experiments



Stage 4E: Exploring Solids, Liquids and Gases



Happy Birthday!

A very happy birthday to our children who are celebrating their special day this week. We wish you all the best!



06/09 - Nicholas (2E)



10/09 - Avivah (4E)