



REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL ST LEONARDS NEWSLETTER



REDDAM

ELS

22nd October 2021

Principal's Message

By Mrs Simone Cooke

Dear Parents,

As we commence the final term for the year we also begin the process of transitioning the children to the next stage of their learning journey, building their self-help skills, autonomy and sense of identity. Central to their growth is helping our children to build emotional self-regulation and manage their emotions. This is vitally important both for our toddlers who seek to be more independent and identify their moods and feelings and our pre-schoolers who are beginning to understand how their behaviours and actions affect others.

Self-regulation requires children to be able to manage their behaviours and reactions to the feelings and events that occur around them. For instance, we expect that a 2 year old will still have a tantrum if they want something, as they may be frustrated by not being able to express their needs or emotions. Yet, we expect that a 5 year old will have much more self control and will use their words to express their feelings rather than biting, hitting or throwing themselves on the floor in anger. Yet, some children have a more difficult time regulating their emotions and so we need to assist them in developing the skills they need to be less impulsive and act appropriately to situations. This includes building strategies that help our children to calm down, to handle frustration without aggressive outbursts and to develop self-discipline.

As teachers we aim to support our children and guide their behaviours by establishing a Circle of Security. This relies on teachers being available to support children as they deal with difficult situations, building a sense of security and trust and providing positive reinforcement and encouragement to make 'good choices', build pride in themselves and encourage them to use a range of communication strategies to express their needs and feelings. This builds empathy, greater self-esteem and helps them deal with conflict constructively by encouraging them to seek good relationships with others.

Principal's Message Continued...

Building strong connections and having a good understanding of each child's unique needs allows our teachers to support and foster emotional regulation in our children. Strategies that you can use at home to help support your child to build these important skills includes:

- Be as consistent as possible – Setting limits and expectations for behaviour and responding to this consistently helps children to understand what the boundaries are for behaviours.
- Be a good role model – Children watch, observe and learn from our behaviours. When we control our own emotions, such as taking a deep breath when we are frustrated or taking time out when frustrated, sends powerful messages to children of strategies they can use to control their own strong emotions.
- Avoid Power Struggles – It is important to avoid head to head battles that result in a stand off. Instead it is beneficial when dealing with conflict to try to find a win-win solution. This may mean negotiating with your child and making some concessions, as long as you are reaching the outcome you are seeking. If you can get your child's "buy in" it will be far more successful and will also teach them the importance of working with others.
- Offer regular positive reinforcement - It is very important that we do not just give attention to negative behaviours but instead are always looking to offer reinforcement for the good choices that children are making. If we only react to negative behaviours then we run the risk of encouraging our children to engage in attention seeking behaviours.
- Be firm when you need to be - Remember that children feel safe and secure when we set limitations. Our children need us to set reasonable boundaries and to help them respond appropriately to their feelings. At times this means not giving in to tantrums and being firm about what behaviour you expect from them.
- Remind them of the rules and offer responsibilities. Slowly offering your child responsibilities and encouraging them to help others builds empathy and helps them understand the impact their actions have on others. It is important to regularly remind them of the rules you have at home. Involving them in setting rules is also beneficial as it encourages them to take joint responsibility for the wellbeing of others.

Rather than avoiding situations we know are difficult for our children it is important that we support them through these challenges. By scaffolding the behaviours we want to encourage we guide our children's responses to anxiety, anger and frustration and help them to control strong emotions appropriately. When your child makes a poor choice, talk to them calmly about a better way they could choose to respond next time. Above all else, remember that building emotional regulation is a process that requires patience and perseverance and that the aim is not to suppress a child's emotions but rather help them to consciously manage them.

Wishing you a wonderful weekend.

Element Soil

It's the start of Term 4 and we it is time to explore the earth and soil beneath our feet... Soil what a wonderful element it is and one that we can not live without. Everyone was very excited to embrace their play with the soil and the children showed strong curiosity and enthusiasm and they had a wonderful time getting their hands all dirty as we explored the planter boxes and looked at how we need the soil to grow our plants. Just the sensation of touching the dry soil and understanding how it feels was a really lovely way to develop the children's awareness of the Earth. Well done Babies!

We also got carried away with drawing as everyone had a turn at holding the crayons and learning to make lines and marks onto the paper to represent our soil experience. And once again we had lots of enthusiastic learners, with everyone showing a real willingness to help each other. Well done Babies it's a great start to the term as you explore your new environment and make new friendships with one another.



Stage 1R: Exploring Soil



Stage 1R: Exploring Our Environment



Stage 1R: Outdoor Investigations!



Nature And Loose Parts

“Nature is a tool to get children to experience not just the world, but themselves.” – Stephen Moss

Welcome to term 4 , it's amazing how quickly time flies by when you are having fun.

This term we are exploring the wonderful provocation of “Nature and Loose Parts”

Firstly there are so many benefits for toddlers when they engage with nature and natural materials, the learning benefits are endless and children genuinely enjoy being outdoors and having the opportunity to discover and play with natural materials.

Some of the benefits of nature play and learning include; promotion of creativity and imagination, it teaches responsibility and provides different stimulation and lastly it allows children to use their imaginations. The children all loved playing with all our natural materials in class. Some of them built their own towers and stacked some of the wooden pieces on top of each other, while others arranged them in different sizes.

In stage 1E and 1D the children enjoyed two great sensory activities this week. The first activity was leaves in ice-blocks. This activity was great for sensory touch. The children loved that the ice-blocks were so cold and enjoyed watching the ice melt, revealing the green leaves.

Our second sensory activity was planting our own seeds. The children were each given a small container, soil and seeds. They were shown how to scoop up the soil into their container, followed by making a hole in the soil for the seeds. Lastly they covered the seeds with soil and sprayed some water on the soil. This activity provided the children with fine-motor skill development and helped improve their concentration and learning capabilities.

As part of our family involvement this term, I have introduced each family to our wonderful friends curious Callie and curious Carl. It has been so exciting to see all the different adventures the children are taking on the weekends with their curious friend. I will be showcasing some of these great photos in our newsletter throughout term 4. I would like to thank all the parents for their involvement in our nature exploration activity.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend!

Stage 1E + 1D: Leaf Ice-blocks & Nature Play



Stage 1E + 1D: Planting Seeds



Stage 1E + 1D: Curious Carl & Curious Callie



This Is Us!

This week we commenced our final term together, and the theme of our learning is to be This Is Us! The programme will serve as a reflection of our year together as 2R, with a unit exploring concepts such as identity and sense of self, and as preparation for next year as the children embark on our preschool readiness programme.

During group times we revisited the portraits we took of each child at the beginning of the year. It was amazing to look back at photos taken just nine months ago and seeing how much they have changed! Beyond the physical differences as they have grown over the year, it was wonderful to see the emotional development evident as we asked them to examine their portraits. Children who began the year as quiet, shy, somewhat apprehensive two-year-olds have blossomed into confident, happy and engaged children who have formed great bonds with their peers and demonstrate to us each day that they know they are a part of our wonderful class.

We recreated our very first art project of painting these portraits for all the friends who have joined the class over the year. Using black and white images of them taken on their first days with us, they used primary colours to decorate their faces as we discussed with them the secondary colours that were forming as the dyes mixed together.

Our learning stations were focussed on sensory experiences and loose part play, which is an integral part of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. We made kinetic sand and placed it in tubs with a range of small found objects such as corks, coloured stones, bottle caps and wood chips. The purpose of this was to allow the children to approach the activity in any way they wanted, and it was our job as educators to observe how they played and provide guidance to extend their self-directed learning.

Some used the loose parts as tools to manipulate the sand and build structures, others took a more mathematical approach as they sorted and collected items into groups. One thing we noticed across the class is how well the children interacted with each other as they played, and how considerate they were of each other's right to play. "Sharing is caring" has become the unofficial motto of the class, and we often overhear gorgeous moments as they repeat the phrase to each other as they distribute the toys and resources among themselves.

We are looking forward to a wonderful final term together as we reflect on our times together and prepare the children for the next stage of their preschool journey. As next week is Halloween we are encouraging the children to dress up however they choose, to incorporate the celebrations into a topic on self-expression and dramatic play!

Stage 2R: Portrait Artwork



Stage 2R: Loose Part Play



Stage 2: Friendships!



Spring Has Sprung

Welcome back to Term 4. I hope you were all able to have a relaxing time despite all the restriction challenges. I am also very excited to be back with the Reddam family and now with my very own addition. All staff have been so welcoming and it feels like home again.

Term 4 will be full of questions and discoveries. More than ever we will be following the children's interests and exploring the answers. During the school break the children had a great time inside and outside the school. On my visits to the school I loved to hear the children telling me stories, showing me their treasures and sharing their experiences.

Spring has arrived and the children have been amazed by the amount of flowers they could see on their nature walks during lockdown. Based on this interest we planned activities where children could explore the anatomy of flowers in addition to enjoy their beauty.

We invited the children to join the Spring Festival and celebrate by making their own Flower Potion. We provided children with a number of natural loose parts resources as they turned into a chef and made their own spring potion. With a bit of this and mix with a bit of that, it provides children with infinite possibilities to play and create their own flower potion.

During group times, we also engaged children by making further investigation into the different types of flowers. We like the Jacaranda because it is purple, we like the Bird of Paradise because it has a shape of a bird, we like the Sunflower because it moves as the sun goes. And, the one we love the most is the Venus Flytrap! We are fascinated by how the Venus Flytrap would go snap, just like the crocodile! Did you know that it takes only just a fraction of a second for the Venus Flytrap to snap shot?

During the week, we also engaged children into a discussion of an open-ended question to further extend their inquiry thinking. We raised the question 'What superpower do you want to have? Why?', and here are some of the answers from children.

'I want to have a superpower like Elsa. I will make lots of snow and I can play with snow,' said Dominique.

'I want to have the superpower to go as fast as a rocket ship so I can travel to space,' said Rohan.

'I am going to turn everything blue. Because I like the colour blue,' said Jack S.

'I want to be like Owlette, so I can play with CatBoy,' said Charlotte C.

We are looking forward to seeing where our enquiring minds provocation is going to take us next. Please feel free to share any suggestions you may have.

Stage 2/3: Creating Flower Potions



Stage 2/3: Exploring Anatomy Of Flowers



Stage 2/3: Friendships!



Stage 3

By Ms Emily Chacon

When I Grow Up

As you know your child will be progressing into Stage 4 in 2022, and as such I wish to get them as prepared as I possibly can. Throughout our final Term of 2021, our provocation will be 'When I Grow Up'. Throughout this program the children will solely be focussing on their preschool program and developing life skills, which they will use throughout their adult lives.

Over the past two weeks the children have engaged in several experiences that have enriched these learning areas.

In our dramatic play station, we set up a play kitchen with placemats that displayed the correct way to set up the table.

A play kitchen is a great way to help a child develop stronger social skills and a larger vocabulary. The pretend-play experience of a toy kitchen can also foster a child's imagination and creative problem-solving skills while building their independence, and confidence.

On the table were some ice cream cones with numbers displayed on them. To make their own ice cream, the children were first asked to recognise the numbers. Then they used the tongs to pick up the pom-poms and place the matching amount on top of the numbered cones. This movement and use of hand muscles further developed the children's fine motor skills.

The children love to count. These ideas can help them build mathematic, counting skills. Developing numeracy skills early gives children a foundation for their learning and development, it prepares them for daily life, including general problem solving.

Continuing through our preschool program, one of our focusses is shapes. Through this, the children learnt about the shape names and their attributes. At our table activity, the children used playdough to make various shapes. As they did this, the teachers discussed the names of the shapes as well as how many sides, corners or edges they had.

Learning about shapes develops children's mathematical understanding and provides foundational knowledge for later learning of geometry. Additionally, learning to identify, discuss and compare attributes of shapes gives students practice with categorising and sorting, skills that assist with later learning not only in mathematics but also transferring into different learning areas, such as science.

Stage 3: Setting The Table



Stage 3: Making Shapes



Stage 3: Singing In The Rain!



Investigating Literacy

Welcome back to term 4. It is very exciting to say that this is the last term of the year and what a fun time we have had over the last few weeks during the Vacation Care program.

Going forward, 3/4 will be focusing on investigating literacy. We will be participating in all things language and words. We will explore the meaning of language and how important it is in everyday life and that words are all around us. We will also incorporate a news item into the morning group time each day, where the class can practise their communication skills, language expression, listening and receptive language knowledge. Please feel free to email me with any questions or queries you may have about the news groups. This week we studied the letter E. We walked around the school with magnifying glasses and looked for the letter of the week. "I see lots of e's" exclaimed the class as we walked around the classrooms and looked at the displays and words on the walls. We found upper case and lower case e's and discussed the rules regarding the use of big letters and little letters. The children have also taken this learning home with them and looking for the letter a when they are with their families. Please keep encouraging your child to look for the letter of the week when you are out and about during the weekend and making them aware that letters are everywhere not just in story books!

We also took some time with the letter puzzle. Working in small groups, the children joined the puzzle pieces together to try and make words. Together we tried to sound out the words that we had made and laughed when we realised that the words that we had made did not make sense! This was all good practise in becoming familiar with the sounds that each letter makes and as we know, practise makes perfect!



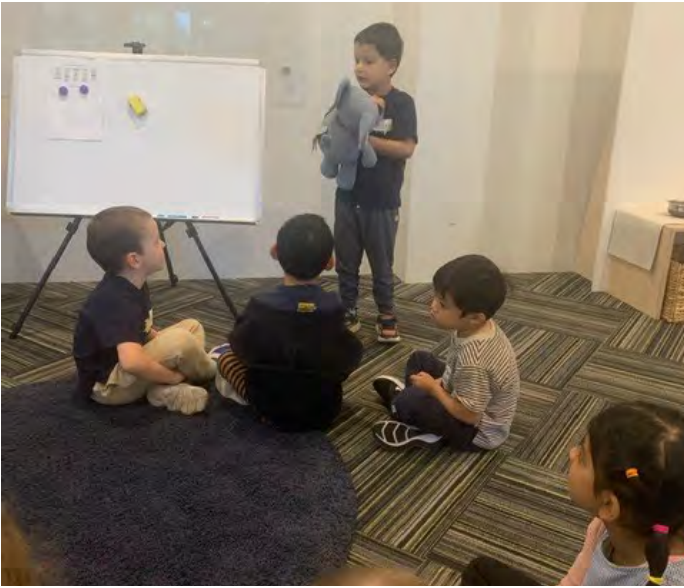
Stage 3/4: Exploring Letter Artwork



Stage 3/4: Letter Matching Games



Stage 3/4: Exploring the Letter e



Preparation for Kindergarten

This term Stage Four has come together as a combined cohort to prepare the children for their last term of preschool here at Reddam. This term we will be focussing on the development and skills that the children need to have to ensure that they are prepared for kindergarten.

When we discuss school readiness this refers to whether a child is ready to make an easy and successful transition into school. The term 'preschool readiness' might be used in the same manner in reference to beginning preschool. School readiness can be actively facilitated with a little forward planning to ensure that children regularly participate in activities that develop the appropriate skills required to help optimal learning when they start school. While many people think of academics (e.g. writing their name, counting to 10, knowing the colours) as the important school readiness skills, school readiness actually refers to a much broader range of skills. In addition to some academic basics, school readiness skills also include self care (independent toileting and opening lunch boxes), attention and concentration, physical skills (e.g. having the endurance to sit upright for an entire school day), emotional regulation, language skills and play and social skills.

The development of school readiness skills allows school teachers to expand and further develop a child's skills in the specific areas of social interaction, play, language, emotional development, physical skills, literacy and fine motor skills. Without these basic skills already established upon entry to school, children can very quickly find themselves playing 'catch up' compared to their peers that are advancing more quickly.

The areas that we will be focusing on this term are;

- **Self Regulation:** The ability to obtain, maintain and change emotion, behaviour, attention and activity level appropriate for a task or situation.
- **Sensory processing:** Accurate processing of sensory stimulation in the environment as well as in one's own body that influences attention and learning that affects how you sit, hold a pencil and listen to the teacher.
- **Receptive language (understanding):** Comprehension of spoken language (e.g. the teachers instructions).
- **Expressive language (using language):** Producing speech or language that can be understood by others (e.g. talking to friends).
- **Articulation:** The ability to clearly pronounce individual sounds in words.
- **Executive functioning:** Higher order reasoning and thinking skills (e.g. What do I need to pack to take to school?).
- **Emotional development/regulation:** The ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and regulate emotions (for a child's own responses to challenges).
- **Social skills:** Determined by the ability to engage in reciprocal interaction with others (either verbally or non-verbally), to compromise with others and to be able to recognise and follow social norms.
- **Planning and sequencing:** The sequential multi-step task/activity performance to achieve a well-defined result (e.g. a cut and paste task).

Stage 4 Combined

As we have combined both stage four classes together this week we started off with looking at how to introduce ourselves to other children and how to engage in fun activities that require no resources that will be useful to play in the playground at school, for example; What's the time Mr Wolf and Tag.

With coming and meeting new people comes learning new things about each other. As a group we had a friendship discussion, each child stood up in front of their peers and as a group their friends had to say words that described that child. For example; Happy, friendly, caring and so on.

To extend the children's writing we sat with each child individually and assisted as they wrote the words that was spoken during our friendship discussions. This was a way for us to help reinforce what was said about them as we read through the words with them and they wrote them down. It will serve as a precious reminder to be able to look at their pictures surrounded by positive words given by their friends.

This week we looked at the mathematical concept of measurement/ sink or float. This applies some of the earliest mathematics that children learn, and there are many informal and formal opportunities to support this development in the classroom. In play, measurement is already very meaningful, particularly around fairness. My rock is heavier, the feather floats not sinks. These assertions all show a strong awareness of measurement. We provided the children with different weighted materials, scales and tubs of water. This allowed them to experiment and hypothesis what would happen. From this we asked each child to pick one object on the table and they had to predict what the object would do when placed into water. From this we asked the children to write out their prediction and draw a picture.



Stage 4: Sink Or Float



Stage 4: Words Of Friendship



Stage 4: Outdoor Fun!



Piano

By Mr Alan Tang

This was the second week of piano lessons after lockdown. The children across all stages at Reddam have matured so much this term, they were showing great listening skills and discipline throughout the lesson. It must be the routines and organised learning schedules that they had been exposed to daily at Reddam. This week Stage 3/4 and 4 were taught how to play the first part of "Brother John". They had also learnt how to locate the key "C", "D" and "E" across the piano. The keys were also nicknamed "C for Cat", "D for Dog" and "E for Emily". Stage 2 had explored more finger exercises and finding the key "D" across the piano. The children were progressing massively for the past 2 weeks. They had demonstrated their ability to retain knowledge. With great discipline and motivation, the children at Reddam are a pleasure to teach.

