



REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL WOOLLAHRA NEWSLETTER



Dee's Message

26 FEBRUARY 2021

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

It was another happy week in the ELS, as we reached the mid-way point of the first term of 2021. The children and their teachers had a busy and varied week, which is clear from the reports below. There is certainly nothing predictable and staid about life in the ELS!

Every day brings with it new opportunities for learning for the children. The wonderful thing about following a Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education is that we embrace unpredictability and the opportunities for learning which spring from the children's innate sense of adventure. Their inquiring minds often lead discussions in ways which the teachers could never have predicted, and they provide the chance to explore their questions in practical ways.

Along with freshly acquired knowledge about the world and about other people,

the children are also constantly learning new skills. Some of these are essential skills, which they require each day, like looking after their clothing or their lunchboxes, or going to the toilet, or remembering to wash their hands, and so on. Other skills are those which they might only require occasionally, but which make use of their gross and fine motor skills.

You may have read the poster which says the following: "When you cut it for me, write it for me, open it for me, set it up for me, draw it for me, or find it for me... all I learn is that you do it better than me." Obviously, there are times, especially with the youngest children in the ELS, that our teachers have to do all of the above. However, with time – and with growing confidence and ever-developing abilities from the children – they are able to do so much more than they could before.

Dee's Message

Of course, this is all part of the process of growing up. One of the great joys of interacting with young children is to see their insatiable appetite for learning, whether in new knowledge or in the skills which they so love to master. Sometimes the best thing to do is just to stand back and marvel at their determination as they try to climb onto a chair, or open a container, or paint a masterpiece.

While some skills are enjoyable to learn, others are just as necessary but not always as pleasant to be reminded of. Cleaning up after a morning's creativity, taking the time to be kind to others, remembering to sanitise

one's hands, or be responsible with one's belongings. All of these provide structure and discipline to a child's life and as much as we might think that childhood should be all about enjoying it to the full, a child also needs parameters, as these give a sense of order and predictability.

Have a wonderful weekend! Chag Purim Sameach to all our Jewish families, as they enjoy celebrating this joyous festival on the Jewish calendar.

Dee Pitcairn
Principal



Dee's Message

Photo Gallery



Dee's Message

Photo Gallery



The Nest (1R)

Kiri Winders, Rachael Soegiono, Min Pattharasiritanarat & Rochelle Lundie

It was a festive week in the Nest! We continued our Chinese New Year theme, making dumplings with our teacher, Helena! Over the past couple of weeks, the children have been very interested in pretend cooking with all the little pots and pans in the home corner. We also introduced play dough activities at the mini atelier, which the children enjoyed. Making dumplings seemed like a perfect learning extension for them. Eugene's Dad also shared with us that he is a chef, and that he had been very busy over the New Year period in his restaurants.

It was so lovely to see Eugene following in his father's footsteps, as one of the most eager to mix the flour and water together! Freya announced that she knew all about making dumplings by saying "jiaiozi". Helena helped each of the children to mix the flour and water and knead it in their hands to make the dumpling shell. They all took a turn to feel and squish the dough. Helena showed them how to make it flat. She then passed them a blueberry or cheese to put inside. Eugene, Claire, Freya, Cosmo and Isabella were very keen to try and eat the little blueberries, so we decided to make it into a game of hide and seek. It was so much fun!

We cooked the dumplings in the kitchen and each of the children tasted them for afternoon tea. Yum!

We also continued to make our fireworks paintings. The children loved to twist and turn the colourful paint onto the paper to make a swirling effect and they added some glittery gold for a sparkling effect. The children all enjoyed experimenting with the colours and shapes that they made.

Dressing up for Purim Festival was another way we celebrated the culture of our Nest and school family! The children were all given a little crown to decorate by sticking on colours and glitter to some cut out paper plates.

Celebrating and learning about the various cultures within our group is an important way for us to connect and create a sense of belonging. It helps the children to develop their identity and feeling like they fit in, whilst having loads of fun!



The Nest (1R)

Photo Gallery



Fledglings (1E)

By Hannah Corrigan, Jane Teh, and Nadia Breus

Getting Creative

In the Fledglings, the children were invited to the mini atelier. They were given a blank piece of paper and the opportunity to create a piece of art that was completely their own.

Fostering creativity helps children to develop mentally, socially, and emotionally. Young children are masters of the moment—they love the way it feels when they smear paint on paper, how it looks when they sprinkle glitter, and even the soft sound a brush makes as it crosses the page.

Children are naturally curious. From the minute they gain control of their limbs, they work to put themselves out into the world to see how it all works. They explore, observe and imitate, trying to figure out how things operate and how to control themselves and their environments. This unrestricted exploration helps children form connections in their brain.

Art is a natural activity to support this free play in children. The freedom to manipulate different materials in an organic and unstructured way allows for exploration and experimentation. These artistic endeavours and self-directed explorations are not only fun, but educational as well.

Painting can help children to communicate their emotions or feelings. Through the use of different colours, they can express themselves without the use of words. Painting can be a great medium to progress and discover their creativity. They learn about various colour mixtures and how they go together.



Fledglings (1E)

Photo Gallery



Stage 2

By Daniella Gosty, Karla Cabezas, Shauna Corry, Sarah Noone, Roberta Sokame and Joyce Matsui

Gung Hay Fat Choy – Happy Chinese/Lunar New Year.

Sharing our culture

When children share information about themselves, their family and cultural practices with their peers this not only provides children with language learning opportunities but is also an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of the families within the group and community. Cultural identity is an important contributor to people's wellbeing. Identifying with a particular culture gives people feelings of belonging and security.

Over the past week, Stage Two were involved in experiences that celebrated Chinese New Year (or Lunar New Year). Riley (from our Thursday/Friday class) brought in red envelopes for the beginning of the Lunar (Chinese) New Year celebration and handed these to his friends as symbol of good luck for the new year ahead. We learned a song about the dragon and lions dancing. The children enjoyed using the lion and dragon puppets as we sang the song – See the lion dance and prance, hear the drums go boom, boom boom, see the fireworks go pop, pop, pop, hear the cymbals clash, clash clash, and hear the children laugh and play on Chinese New Year's Day. Edwyn was very excited, announcing to everyone outside that we had a dragon in our room.

As part of the celebrations, we made fireworks that are now displayed on the wall outside the classroom. The children loved using the glittery collage materials to give our firework display a three-dimensional textural experience. We even turned our game of 'jump jump Josie' into a game of fireworks popping (jumping). Stay tuned – there is more to come as we work on a collaborative project to make a large dragon for dancing.

Motor skill development

Motor development means the physical growth and strengthening of a child's bones and muscles and the ability to move and touch his/her surroundings. A child's motor development falls into two categories: fine motor and gross motor. Fine motor skills refer to small movements in the hands, wrists, fingers, feet, toes, lips and tongue. Gross motor skills involve motor development of muscles that enable babies to hold up their heads, sit and crawl, and eventually walk, run, jump and skip.

Throughout the day, the children are always working on developing, strengthening, consolidating and extending on their skills through various activities that are either planned, or spontaneous experiences, or part of our daily routine. The Kookaburra class have been enjoying the playdough and working on developing their scissors skills (a fine motor skill). Playdough is one of our favourite materials to practise cutting because it's easy for children to hold and the texture is fun to cut! Using scissors with playdough helps to develop and improve hand-eye coordination and is great for building muscle tone that will be required for writing later on in schooling years.

Let's go jumping – you will have noticed that we always seem to play the same game of 'jump jump Josie' or a variation of it throughout the day. Not only is jumping fun, but it also leads to the next phases of gross motor development – galloping, skipping, and hopping on one foot! Jumping takes strength, balance, coordination, and motor planning. Once your child gets all of those individual pieces figured out, watch out! Jumping will start, and once it does, it most likely will not stop! The children have also been working on jumping off the wooden blocks. "I can do it," said Valentine.

Stage 2 Photo Gallery



Stage 2

Photo Gallery



Stage 3

By Christina Mandalidis, Susan Casey, Jason Corrigan and Yuliya Ginis

Grow with Me

The provocation for this term, in 3E class, is 'Grow with Me'. This inspiration is based on learning about children as individuals, as well as their peers, in a welcoming and supportive environment. This also includes being present in the child's life – celebrating big and/or small milestones and sharing them with their family.

The children have been sharing and learning stories with and about each other including their families and feelings. As they engage in these processes, children are provided with various stimulating learning opportunities to support their development and fascinating interests.

Following Children's Interests

'Interests' refer to subjects, ideas, things, topics and events which stimulate the curiosity of the child. These interests are used as springboards of the learning program, making sure that the curated experiences are fun, hands-on and interesting. As we maintain an emergent curriculum, these occurrences involve teamwork among children and adults as they both explore each child's interests and express their own theories and understandings through a variety of representative mediums.

We conduct a group reflection discussion each week as part of our group time and use this as an opportunity to ask the children for their suggestions and expectations for the coming weeks. The discussions have been productive as they eagerly shared their ideas and interests such as: "I have got lots of cars at home. I like cars"; "I like trains, cars and fire trucks"; "I just want to play with yellow playdough. Can we make a rainbow playdough next week?"; "I like babies and books about mummy and the baby"; "I want to play with friends" ; "I want to play

on my own"; "I may want a phone, and the babies and the train truck"; "I like to play with the road, cars and the choo train and the babies"; "I like planes and helicopters".

These discussions paved the way for enthralling and exciting learning experiences such as making playdough, painting roads with cars and trains, and folding and flying paper airplanes in the big playground.

Malaguzzi (2002) purports that children are viewed as "strong, capable and resilient, rich with wonder and knowledge." He believes that "every child brings with them a deep curiosity and potential and this innate curiosity drives their interest to understand their world and their place within it."

Children's Adventures around our wonderful country of Australia.

To extend the Australia Day celebration and make it even more personal and meaningful, I initiated collecting information about the children's adventures around our wonderful country of Australia. All children are invited to bring a photo of themselves and their family showing an immersion of experience in any part of the country. Each of them will be given the moment to share vivid and thrilling narratives as they recall pieces of information that sums up their real-life tales.

Stage 3

By Christina Mandalidis, Susan Casey, Jason Corrigan and Yuliya Ginis

What's next: This is an ongoing project, so if you have visited anywhere around Sydney or Australia, please send in some photos for us to add to our book where the children will have the freedom to scan and recount these priceless memories each time they see it.

Celebrating Chinese New Year, the Year of the Ox

We conducted our own little project as an extension of our recent Lunar New Year Celebration. Prior to the implementation, I gathered relevant resources related to China such as the Chinese flag, a map of China, some famous Chinese cuisine, clothing, housing, dancers, a Chinese dragon, and some festivities important to them. The children collaborated on this project as they applied their knowledge and skills in cutting, gluing, and assembling these images on our giant paper. In addition, we viewed some video clips on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3pdiuCh32E> that showcased some festival dancing in China. Lastly, the children joined a dragon parade with their peers. Chinese dragons are symbolic to the Chinese culture. They believe that these Chinese dragons bring massive luck to people. Hence, the longer they appear on the dance, the greater the luck that awaits the community.

To enrich our budding connection with respect to diversity and the Chinese culture, we incorporated informative read-aloud in our program. We read books called 'Fang Fang's Chinese New Year' by Sally Rippin, 'Peppa's Chinese New Year' and 'Lanterns and Firecrackers, a Chinese New Year Story' by Janny Zucker and Jan Barger.

We continue to promote and cultivate positive relationships, connections and develop a sense of belongingness amongst the children by incorporating celebrations of cultures and festivals of children and families

that are represented in our school. The first term alone gives us the privilege to commemorate special occasions such as Valentine's Day, Lunar New Year and Purim to help strengthen each child's sense of family, culture, and community.

"Participating in cultural and artistic experiences are necessary for building children's understanding, not only of their own culture but other cultures, as it provides opportunities to broaden their horizons and learn from other cultural and artistic traditions. Thus contributing towards mutual understanding and appreciation of diversity." UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Each endeavour poured into making these experiences timely, individualised, and meaningful drives us to witness all children's milestones as we go back to this term's provocation, 'Grow with Me'.



Stage 3

Photo Gallery



Stage 3

Photo Gallery



Stage 3

Photo Gallery



Stage 4

By Cassandra Holmes, Jane Pledger, Sandra Carberry, Nina Bergel and Kristina Rocchi

Building relationships and making connections

Continuing with our Provocation 'Building relationships and making connections', the children drew a beautiful family portrait, mostly including their immediate family members. It is important to build and foster a connection between home and school, and this experience gave the children the opportunity to engage in conversation and share information about their families and home life.

Creating their family picture builds their ability to think because they think, plan, and make choices while they are drawing. They are also practising and developing their memory and visual expression skills. There was a lot of telling information, such as their relationship with parents, or something specific about a sibling. Through these conversations the children develop their verbal, thinking and expression skills. They used descriptive language to describe what they were drawing, and also talked about size relationships, like bigger and smaller.

Creating their family picture develops self-pride, self-confidence, and identity, as they think of themselves as belonging and important.

Name Provocations

Young children are highly interested in their own name. Children's names are the first words they understand and can identify with – so they connect print with something very meaningful – it is personal. This leads to an interest in trying to 'copy' it, and then writing in a more conventional way. Names are an important part of their identity and children are proud of them. Therefore, using names to teach letters and name recognition is a very powerful teaching tool.

Name recognition can happen naturally over time. Keeping names visible helps with this. This starts every morning in the classroom when children look for their name on their locker. We have name labels displayed with children's artwork on the wall. And throughout the day the children are encouraged to write their names on their artwork.

We have introduced a sign in sheet for each child. This presents their name in print, followed by letters to be traced and then a blank line for the children to write their name independently. The children are encouraged to sign in every day. We also have an attendance chart that the children interact with, recognising their name and placing it under the 'present/absent' heading. They are beginning to explore their friends' names too, discussing and identifying letters.

The children enjoyed creating their name using Q-tips and paint. During this experience, they were demonstrating and further developing their fine motor skills, and their letter and name recognition skills.

Stage 4

Photo Gallery



Stage 4

Photo Gallery



Dance & Drama

By Laura Hudson

This week in Drama we continued with the theme of **Bears, Bears, Bears!** We explored the theme of bears using the well-known story "**Goldilocks and the Three Bears**".

In **Stage 1**, we are working on getting the children comfortable with new and interesting objects and concepts and building confidence. This week, after parachute work, Stage 1 gathered around a jack in the box with a bear inside. We watched as the music played and the bear popped out! The children then had a visit from a turtle puppet. Hallie and Frankie were very brave.

At the beginning of Drama during the week, **Stage 2, 3, and 4** were told the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. After the story, the children were encouraged to **mime** some of the key parts. We mimed brushing Goldilocks' hair, putting on a lovely dress, finding a house, and looking through the windows.

Stage 2 and 3 were encouraged to skip through the woods, while **Stage 4** were given different movements to work on like skipping, high knees, and walking backwards. Once we arrived at the bears' house, we knocked on the door and asked, "Is anybody home?" And we listened for a response. We peered through the windows and we could see three of everything. The children held up the number '3' with their fingers, working on their fine motor skills.

Once inside the bears' house, we could smell porridge. We used our noses to lead us into the kitchen. The children showed me a big bowl of porridge, a medium one, and a small one using their bodies. The children showed me with their faces that the big one was too hot and the medium one was too cold. We gobbled up the small one and then moved to the lounge room.

In the lounge room, we saw a big chair, a medium chair, and a small chair. We showed the difference in sizes with our bodies. When we sat on the small chair... it broke! I encouraged Stage 3 and 4 to give me ideas of how we could fix the chair. Angus thought cement might help fix the chair, and Isabella suggested that we buy a new one. Remy in Stage 4 wanted to fix the chairs with his car tools. After attempting to fix the chair (but failing) we decided to go upstairs for a nap.

The stairs were very creaky, so we made onomatopoeic sounds while we walked. In the bedroom, we jumped on the beds before choosing one to sleep in. Stage 2 fell asleep and I became the bear coming home from my walk. I chased the kids out of my house! Stage 3 and 4 broke off into two groups. One group played Goldilocks asleep in the bed, and the other group played the bears. The bears, coming home from their walk, found their porridge ruined, their chair broken, and someone asleep in the little bear's bed! Group 1 were encouraged to stay VERY still while the bears were walking through their house. The bears then chased Goldilocks from their house! We swapped groups, so everyone had a chance at being both characters.

Stage 2 and 3 were treated to the bear in the box. They were asked questions about the exterior of the box: what colours are there? What are the bears doing? and How many bears are there?

Well done everyone in Drama this week!

Dance & Drama

By Laura Hudson



Music

By Nick Summerfeld

In Stage 3 and 4, we opened the lesson with 'Hokey Pokey', an easy warm-up which gets everyone moving while working out our left-to-right. After our bodies were warm, we moved into our line around the piano and began some simple warm-up scales on 'BA' and then onto 'LA'. Scales are a great way to help develop ears to recognise pitch while strengthening the muscles and articulators in the mouth to help in speech development.

After our scales we used our maracas to shake along to 'ABC'. The kids love seeing how fast they can shake along to various songs – much faster than I seem to be able to play! Once we shook out our letters, we used our maracas to keep a steady beat while slowly increasing in tempo.

Revisiting our reversed numbers, we continued to learn our backwards scales with kids now comfortably getting down to 5. In Stage 4, if they could repeat it correctly, we got their teacher to try the exercise. The children found this hilarious and some teachers did really well!

To finish off the lesson we used balloons to help give a physical expression to understanding pitch. Introducing a 'MIDDLE' pitch, we now had three varying frequencies in sound including 'LOW' and 'HIGH'. Using the balloon, the children held it above their heads for 'HIGH', in-front of their bodies for 'MIDDLE' and towards the floor for 'LOW'. To challenge our Stage 4, they closed their eyes so they could solely rely on what they heard.

In Stage 2 and The Fledglings we opened the class with 'Hokey Pokey' to get everyone moving. After singing through 'The Good Morning Song', Stage 2 did some simple single note warm-ups. For some fine motor movement, we used 'Twinkle Twinkle' to work on finger isolation and twinkle our fingers like stars.

After our warm-ups we moved into 'We're Going To The Zoo', one of my childhood favourites. To learn the song, I ask the child to animate each of the animals we hear: monkeys, elephants, giraffes, seals (teacher's favourite!) and rhinos. This is a great exercise to incorporate a wide range of motor movements from stomping, rolling, swinging and stretching our arms. I'm not sure who has more fun with this, the children or me.

The Fledglings continued to learn 'The Sunflower Song' which is a continual hit from my experience in previous years. It is a fun song, with the children starting on the floor as seedlings, waiting patiently to grow into tall, dancing sunflowers!

To end the lesson, we had some free play on the xylophones. Children are expressive and love to explore through movement. In Stage 2 the children were able to sit patiently and follow instructions to find individual colours.

Down in The Nest I opened the lesson by singing to the children – I think Eugene spends the entire lesson entranced and watching what I do! We sang through our warm-ups and then began teaching the kids 'The Sunflower Song'. Teaching anything new to the younger toddlers is hilarious because they just stare for the first few demonstrations... I wonder what they think.

After a few times of the teachers demonstrating the actions, they soon started to get involved. We ended the lesson with some free play on the xylophones before singing our 'Goodbye Song'.

Music

By Nick Summerfeld



Music

By Nick Summerfeld



Happy Birthday



Reddam Early Learning

would like to wish a very happy birthday to

**Innaya Bhojwani, Amalia Millepied, Chloe Hinchclidde,
Ostein Jiang, Lily Bortolotti & Phoebe Wang**

who celebrate their special day this week
and over the weekend.

We hope you have a fabulous day!

