

# Term 4 Newsletter

20/12/2018

## Doncaster Kindergarten

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Can you believe the year is over already? It felt just like yesterday that our little ones were starting kinder and now, my child is getting ready to go to school next year!

I'd like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to our staff and committee, for all your hard work and dedication to keep this kindergarten running so smoothly and all the best for families moving onto the next phase of their child's learning journey.

A very big welcome to new committee members and families; we look forward to working together next year.

We have had another busy term and saw our children learning in leaps and bounds! We have enjoyed many activities in our sessions including a visit from the vet and her dog, having a visit from the police and firemen. As well as enjoying our library visits up at MC2 and our photography shoot at kinder. Our visit to Kew Traffic school was a lot of fun and children learnt about road safety and had practice riding their bicycles.

I am looking forward to returning as your President next year for a bigger and better 2019! Wish you and your families all a happy and safe festive season and Summer holidays ahead.

*Vanessa O'Connell*

*President*



## 3 Year Old Red Group

*By Letitia*

As I sit and write this, the final newsletter for 2018, I can't help but reflect on what has been another wonderfully busy year at Doncaster Kindergarten, and how far your children have come from our first meeting way back in January. Every year I wonder at the marvel of child development as I think about how little, and quiet, all the children are at the beginning of the year compared to the children we see now, all confident and grown up. Red group has been very busy since returning from the holiday break. I have noticed a great improvement with the children's language development and they have been displaying greater confidence in using this to communicate with each other and educators.

We have been building on the children's knowledge and looking at the alphabet in more detail, engaging in a

variety of activities that promote and develop the sounds letters make. This confidence and language acquisition has led to greater social interactions amongst the children as they play together more interactively in both the indoor and outdoor program, proving that they are all ready to take the next big step into 4 year old kinder in 2019. Some of the areas within the program that work well to foster these interactions are, the self-serve mat area, including the block shelf, the home corner area and the outdoor space.

It also provides children with the opportunity to participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes. With this greater interactive play, often comes moments that require some problem solving and negotiating.



This can be a tricky concept for 3 and 4 year olds and often involves well developed language skills. Sometimes this goes well and other times it requires some educator intervention and modeling. However it plays out, it's always a great learning opportunity and one of many your children will encounter in their life's journey. In order to further develop these skills, I have included more small group games into the program such as dominoes, snap, memory, lotto and large floor puzzles. Here the children are required to work together and are encouraged to celebrate and share their contributions and achievements with others. This is also an area that lends itself to solitary play, so caters for, and incorporates all children at their own level of development.

Throughout this term we have further developed the children's knowledge of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths). Here the children are encouraged and supported to manipulate resources to investigate, take apart, assemble, invent and construct. This leads to developing skills such as investigating, reasoning, predicting, questioning, hypothesising, classifying, observing, experimenting, testing, forming and communicating ideas, and adding to the ideas of others.

Literacy and numeracy have been a continual interest in the program which has been supported by a large selection of activities on a regular basis. As part of this emerging interest, we set up a post office to encourage the children to further explore and practise their emerging skills. They have enjoyed creating mail for family members, placing it into an envelope and making a stamp for it. I have observed some children gaining greater awareness and ability in writing their name which we have promoted through practise and reinforcement. Again, this is not necessarily what is expected of children at this age, but it has been an interest they have wanted to explore.



We began the term looking at the changes to the environment as we entered spring, observing the blossom and new buds on the fruit trees in the yard. The children enjoyed experiences within the program to enhance this knowledge such as books, pictures, art activities, puzzles and play dough.

Most recently we have added a greater variety of materials to the collage table to build on the group's creativity and planning skills. This activity has proved very popular with the children and has challenged a variety of their skills. Here the children are encouraged to think about what materials they wish to choose in order to bring to life their vision. This can sometimes be a little tricky as they work out what it is that they are actually trying to create, it is always ok, just to create a thing. It is always about the process not the end product.

Outdoors, the children have enjoyed challenging, stimulating and refining their gross motor skills as they negotiate the rock climbing wall, ride the tricycles, explore ball skills, climb and balance along the wide and narrow boards, engage in a game of quoits and try their luck at hanging from the trapeze swing. The net swing has remained popular throughout the term and the children have been observed taking greater risks as they play. It has also been wonderful to observe the children assisting their friends to achieve these outcomes through play. We have had some great warm weather which has enabled us to have lots of water play in the program and the children have really enjoyed filling their watering cans with endless trips to the tank on their way to the garden.

This term we also spent an extended period of time exploring the concept of the emergency services, what they are and how they help out in the community. The children really responded to this and demonstrated great interest and knowledge as the weeks went on. We further supported this learning with a visit from a member of the Victoria Police and The Metropolitan Fire Brigade who came to kinder to talk to the children about what they do.

The kindergarten year has been a busy one for everyone. This, in itself brings many challenges. It has been wonderful to observe your children grow and develop through these challenges and emerge as confident young individuals, who are ready for the next big step in life, 4 year old kindergarten. For many children it has been the first step from the family unit into the wider community and for parents a big step leaving their children in our care. It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know all red group families and your beautiful, precious children as they begin their journey through life.

This year we welcomed Elva to the teaching group at Doncaster Kindergarten as she took on the teaching of 4 year old Yellow Group. She is also our Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader which is a massive role to take on in her first year with us. I would like to congratulate her on a wonderful job and say that I am



sure that I speak for all the staff in saying we have loved getting to know you and your family and thank you for all your support throughout the year.

Thank you to all parents who very generously gave up your child free time to come and help on duty. We really appreciate it and believe it is essential for running an integrated kindergarten program for your children.

Next, to our wonderful Committee of Management, thank you for your many, many, many hours put in to run our wonderful kindergarten. With each year that goes by, I can't help feel there are increased expectations and workloads placed on your shoulders. You are an extremely dedicated group of volunteers who care so much for our kinder, making it a wonderful place for us staff to teach and for your

children to learn. Goodbye and thank you to those members who are leaving us and for those staying on, we look forward to another great year.

Finally, and most importantly, thank you to both Kay and Michelle for all your continued support and hard work. You are both very dedicated and loving people who make coming to work an absolute joy. I am blessed to work with you both and look forward to doing it all again with Michelle in 2019. Next year's 3 year old group will look a little different as Kay has opted to step down from the 3's and put all her efforts into 4 year old Yellow group. I will miss her dearly as we have worked closely together for the past 12 years. I would also like to thank Meg for your ongoing dedication to teaching. I feel very lucky to be part of such a supportive and inspirational teaching team.

Merry Christmas,

Letitia, Michelle and Kay.

## 4 Year Old Green Group

*By Meg*

2018 has almost come to an end, with the entire year seeming to have flown by. Term 4 has seen the Green Group busy with a wide range of literacy, STEM, cultural & family related experiences & events. It has been wonderful to see how the children have progressed in their social & emotional development from the beginning of the year. We see this demonstrated as they confidently present in front of the class for show & tell at group-time;

as they explore a broader range of activities & extend their own interests with enthusiasm & deep concentration; as they approach peers outside their established friendship groups to play with; & in turn include others in play. At the end of Term parents will receive a summary of children's progress for the year. Here are our highlights of Term 4:



**Emergency Services & Safety Focus.** In October we were visited by emergency services workers. Firstly, a visit from Senior Constable Newport where we learned about the role of the police, their protective equipment, calling 000, as well as checking out her police car. Then it was time for a visit from Senior Leading Firefighter Nev Grgic who showed us his protective equipment & its uses, as well as teaching the children some fire safety drills. Our council run Responsible Pet Incursion showed children how to act safely with dogs. They learned canine 'body language', when to approach a dog (or not), & how to make a safe retreat from an aggressive dog. They also had the opportunity to meet a

very friendly 'Hairy McLary' lookalike... At the beginning of November, we met at Kew Traffic School for our excursion on bike & road awareness/safety. We had an informative safety session as well as putting our knowledge into action and observing road safety rules while cycling around the complex circuit. Children also enjoyed a play & a picnic in the adjacent park on the day. We complemented this learning with books, puzzles, props, dramatic play & plenty of conversation/discussion. Early in the term we carried out our emergency evacuation drill to Doncaster Primary School & finished off term with another lockdown drill.

**STEM activities.** At the beginning of the term we had a focus on 'Rainbow Foods'. This included a fascinating 'behind the scenes' Woolworths Food Discovery Tour; learning about Rainbow Foods in the classroom (thanks to Tongtong's Mum Carina) & cooking these foods at kinder and/or at home. It was fantastic to collaborate with our families in this area; hopefully you enjoyed your Rainbow Foods – we loved seeing what you got up to! Later in the term electricity experiments were very popular with the children; they had a hands-on opportunity to connect electricity circuits to make bulbs glow, buzzers sound, & motors spin different shapes. They also learnt a bit of basic chemistry by splitting water molecules with a weak electrical current to make bubbles of oxygen. With the



warmer weather they are loving water play; & we are hoping to have a 'water play day' before the end of the year. Children bring their bathers to kinder, & we set up a range of water-based activities outside.



**Diwali.** We had some fantastic family input to help us learn about & celebrate Diwali (Indian Festival of Lights & the Hindu New Year), & resources including an animation about the origins of Diwali available for the children to explore. Inside & outside, the children enjoyed drawing chalk rangoli designs. Rishaan's mum Rabia shared her family experiences & knowledge; Delia showed us a beautiful Diwali candle holder her family use; & Avanish's Mum Sunita came in & painted traditional mehndi (henna) designs on our hands.

**Literacy.** Alongside our usual range of literacy resources & activities we have had 4 visits from Grade 3 Doncaster Primary School children to read with us, and we reciprocated with 2 visits to school in November & December. The children enjoyed spending time with their older peers; & it was lovely to see some past Doncaster Kinder students returning. We made our final visit to Doncaster Library for story time with the Junior Librarian. Our dramatic play areas, dress ups & props have been very popular this term. As the children have pretended to be royalty/knights/fairies/veterinary professional/chefs/school students/builders; we have seen their verbal communication & social skills develop rapidly.

**Family.** As well as our family input into the program; Grandparent's & Special Elders Day saw our room buzzing as extended family members joined us for play, refreshments & story time. We also have had great family helpers during sessions in Term 4; we always appreciate your efforts, please keep on coming!



**Transition to School.** Transition statements have been written by families and myself & have been forwarded onto schools. Children have been attending school transition visits, & this is also an ongoing focus in the classroom. Some of our children gave us a preview of next year as they came to school in their uniforms in early December – they looked so grown up! There have been many conversations about school, with children keen to share what they know or expect. We have also seen this interest pop up in dramatic play inside & outside; we're sure there might be a future teacher or 2 in this year's Green Group.

**End of Year Celebrations.** Currently we are preparing for the festive season & our end of year gathering as we practise songs & dances; choosing which to share with our families on the day. We are looking forward to family joining us for a relaxed gathering & party on our last day of term. As part of the learning program we have also begun learning about a variety of cultural & religious traditions that occur around the end of the year/beginning of next.





Many thanks to Michelle, Liz, & our teaching team (including student & reliever Carina) for their continued hard work & commitment to the children & our learning program in 2018. Finally, we thank parents & committee members for their hard work, ongoing support & fundraising efforts this term, & wish you & your families a safe & happy holiday break.

Meg & Michelle

## 4 Year Old Yellow Group

*By Elva*

Term 4 is almost over, and it is hard to believe that it is nearly the end of the year. Kay and I want to thank all our families for your support and participation. I have enjoyed my first year at Doncaster Kindergarten teaching and learning with the children, and working with my lovely co-educator, Kay and all the other teaching staff.

Thank you for all your support. It is a pleasure to witness how the children have grown and matured in so many ways during this year. Now they are all ready to move onto new adventures next year; we would like to wish Yellow group children all the best for the next stage of their learning journey.



Parents and I have completed the transition statements, and they have been forwarded onto schools. During this term, the children all attended their school transition visits and were excited about their school uniforms. To support their interest, we will hold a Uniform day on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December at kinder; all the children are encouraged to dress in their new school uniforms to come into Kinder.

At the beginning of this term, the children were busy with exploring a variety of communities around their world — responsible pet program educated the children how to stay safe around the dogs. Visiting the local supermarket allowed the children to learn how the people work in each department, and how our food gets prepared. To teach road safety rules, we organised an excursion to Kew Traffic School. The children had fun riding on their bikes on the mini road while putting their learning into practice. Learning about emergency services is one of the children's interest, a police officer and firefighter visited us and shared their equipment and work experiences with the children. The children also learnt to call 000 when there is an emergency, and how to keep themselves safe in a case of fire. To assist with our school transition, we have had two visits from Grade 3 Doncaster Primary School children to read their favourite books to us; we also had a chance to visit the Grade 3's classroom and shared some art activities with them. To extend those learning experiences, we have set up different learning activities and environment to support their further learning and understanding, i.e. vet clinic after the responsible pet incursion; road signs, bikes and helmets for outdoor play, emergency service area with police uniforms and fire trucks, the dress up corner with school uniforms. We will also have secondary school children from Doncaster Secondary to visit us on the 12th December and share their Christmas celebration program.

### **STEM learning opportunities**

The children enthusiastically engaged in rain cloud science experiences, to further develop their understanding of how rain clouds are formed, we have used a reference book and combined with another hands-on experiment to explain the water cycle. Throughout the term, the children developed an increasing interest in the natural environment, i.e. observing the growth of the vegetables and fruits, watering them, discussing when to pick them, and tasting the strawberries. We have also learnt different parts of the plants (roots, stem, leaf, bud, and flower) through reading books and watching the videos. In addition, the children have watched a video about how paper made; they understood that when we save paper, we reduce the need to cut down trees.



We have had some great warm weather which has enabled us to have lots of water play in the program. The children enthusiastically explored the water in their way. i.e. creating a muddy patch, cooking, water the plants, water paint the cubby house, water painting, observe what objects sink in/float on the water.

Literacy and numeracy have been a continual interest in the program which has been supported by a range of learning activities on a regular basis. More and more children began to use pictures and writing texts to express ideas and make meaning. They have shown a great interest in letter writing which we explored further by creating a post office and then going on an excursion to the post box on Doncaster Road to post an invitation home.



Toward the end of the term, the children have been busy preparing the festival crafts and mini-concert for our last day party. We look forward to sharing our end of year party with all our families on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December.

Finally, we wish you a safe and enjoyable holiday, and all the best for 2019 and beyond.

Elva and Kay

