

A new year is a fresh page, let's fill it with kindness, curiosity and joy – **Unknown**



JANUARY
2026

FEBRUARY
2026

From the Nominated Supervisor's Desk *What's going on....*

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people.

We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

Dear Families,

Welcome back to WCCC! We hope you all enjoyed a restful holiday break and are feeling recharged for the exciting year ahead. To our returning families, we're so happy to have you with us again for another year of learning and discovery. To those joining us for the first time, we extend a very warm welcome to the WCCC community.

We are so pleased to share that the children are settling into their new programs so well! Over the past few weeks, we have seen growing confidence as they explore their new environments, learn the daily routines, and discover all the exciting learning spaces around them.

Most importantly, meaningful connections are beginning to grow. The children are developing warm and trusting relationships with their educators, seeking them out for support, sharing stories, and engaging in collaborative play. These positive relationships create a strong foundation for learning, wellbeing, and confidence.

We are incredibly proud of how adaptable and resilient the children have been during this transition. We look forward to seeing their friendships, skills, and interests continue to grow throughout the year.

As you may have seen in the foyer, there is a display inviting suggestions for our preschool outdoor playground. We are thinking about changing and refreshing our outdoor play area, and we would love to hear your ideas. If you have a moment, please feel free to write them down and share your thoughts with us.

In the upcoming months, we have exciting activities and events planned for the children. Please stay tuned for more information on these key dates. We encourage all parents and carers to actively participate and engage with the WCCC community to make our children's experiences at WCCC even more special.

Just a friendly reminder to please make regular payments on your account via the Kid soft Parent Portal or BPAY through your bank. If you are experiencing any financial hardship, please don't hesitate to speak with Kylie.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions, concerns, or suggestions as we move forward together.

Kylie and Kelly

CLINIKIDS BLOG

clinkids.thekids.org.au

The Clinikids bog aims to provide practical and evidence-based ideas to support your child and family. It can be hard to navigate the sea of information from professionals, family, friends and the internet.

Each post is written by an experienced member of 'The kids research institute Australia' clinical team including Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Clinical Psychologists.

Kids in the kitchen



EASY ONE BOWL SAVOURY MUFFINS

PREP 12 mins | COOK 18 mins | SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups plain wholemeal flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- sea salt and pepper, to season
- 60 grams butter
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 medium zucchini, grated
- 1 medium carrot, grated
- 1 cup (160 grams) canned corn kernels, drained
- 1 1/3 cups (150 grams) tasty cheese, grated

METHOD

1. **Preheat** oven to 180 C and line a 12-hole muffin tin with papers. **Set aside.**
2. **Place the flour**, baking powder, salt and pepper into a large bowl. **Whisk** to combine creating a well in the centre.
3. **Place the butter**, milk and eggs into the well of the flour and whisk until just combined.
4. **Gently fold** through the zucchini, carrot, corn and cheese. If your batter looks a little dry (depending on the brand – wholemeal flours can vary slightly and require a tad more liquid) simply add a splash of milk.
5. **Evenly divide** the mixture in the prepared muffin tray.
6. **Bake for 15-18 minutes** or until golden and when a skewer inserted removes cleanly.

Allow the muffins to cool for 5-10 minutes before placing on a wire rack to cool completely. **Enjoy x**

Source: Image & recipe 'My lovely lunchbox'

Hop Scotch and Harmony

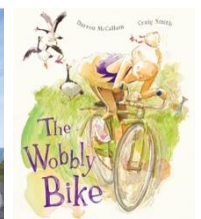
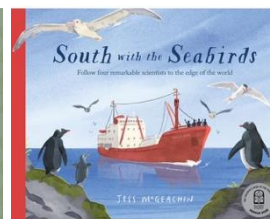
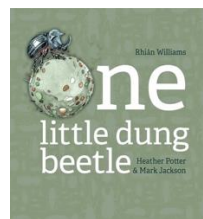
hopscotchandharmony.com.au/blog

The Hopscotch & Harmony blog offers evidence-based insights and practical guidance on child psychology, parenting, and family wellbeing, authored by experienced psychologists.

It covers a wide range of topics including emotional development, anxiety, self-esteem, behaviour support, communication, and cognitive understanding to help parents and caregivers navigate challenges with children and adolescents. The blog also explores strategies for supporting mental health, resilience, and positive relationships, drawing on therapeutic approaches and real-world examples to make complex psychological concepts accessible and useful for everyday family life.

Book reviews

Fresh stories for the food lovers!



ONE LITTLE DUNG BEETLE | RHIÂN WILLIAMS

One Little Dung is a playful, rhyming counting book that invites children into the tiny, fascinating world of beetles. As we follow one hardworking dung beetle and meet a whole host of other beetles. Children explore numbers, rhythm and rich new vocabulary. Detailed, jewel-like illustrations reward close looking, with little visual surprises to spot on each page. Shortlisted for the 2025 CBCA Book of the Year (Early Childhood), this is a joyful way to spark curiosity about mini beasts, caring for our environment and noticing the wonders right outside our doors.

SOUTH WITH THE SEABIRDS | JESS MCGEACHIN

South with the Seabirds tells the remarkable true story of four female scientists who in 1959 undertook a daring expedition to the remote Macquarie Island in the sub-Antarctic. Their journey, aboard an ice-breaking ship, led them to giant seabirds, penguins, seals and a wild, windswept island teeming with life. Through vivid watercolour illustrations and carefully researched storytelling, the book brings alive their discoveries and the wonders of a fragile ecosystem. It's a stirring tribute to scientific curiosity, gender equality in STEM and environmental conservation, perfect to inspire young readers and families.

THE WOBBLY BIKE | DARREN MCCALLUM

The Wobbly Bike is a warm, gently humorous picture book about learning to ride a bike, even when it feels wobbly and out of control. Set in Darwin and rich with snapshots of life in Australia's "top end," the story celebrates the love and encouragement of grandparents, the importance of patience and practise, and the joy of mastering something for the first time. The lilting rhyme and lively illustrations make the mishaps and perseverance feel real and familiar. A wonderful read-aloud for preschoolers and families that gently encourages resilience and kindness.

FOCUS: Understanding Quality and Safety in Early Childhood Services: What Families Should Know



When families choose an early childhood service, one of the first questions—spoken or unspoken—is always the same: “Will my child be safe, supported and cared for here?” It’s a big decision to entrust your baby, toddler or preschooler to someone else’s care, and it’s natural to want confidence that the environment your child enters each day is warm, predictable and protective.

Across Australia, all early childhood education and care services operate under the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF is the national system for regulating and improving the quality of early education and care. It is made up of several key, stable components including- the National Law and National Regulations which are the legal requirements all services must meet including staffing, health and safety, educational programs, physical environment and operational procedures. The NQF also includes the National Quality Standard (NQS) which defines what high-quality education and care looks like and feels like. This means that every service, regardless of type or location, follows a nationally consistent approach to quality. Recent legislative changes, have strengthened the National Law by making the safety, rights and best interests of children the paramount consideration for daily practices, policies and procedures in education and care services.

A Safe, Calm and Predictable Environment

Creating a child-safe environment involves more than child-proof locks or soft flooring. Guided by the NQF, services design spaces where children feel physically secure and emotionally supported. This includes thoughtful room layouts, active supervision, predictable routines and warm, trusting relationships. Educators conduct regular safety checks, maintain equipment and ensure children can move freely and comfortably. You may notice furniture changes or outdoor updates such as improved shade, fencing or soft-fall surfaces—visible signs of the ongoing safety checks and continuous improvement processes required under the NQF.

Safe Sleep and Rest Practices

For babies and toddlers, safe sleep is essential. Services follow recognised safe-sleep guidelines and monitor children closely throughout rest times. The NQF requires educators to stay up to date with training and current recommendations so families can feel confident that sleep routines are carried out safely, consistently and with children’s safety, health and wellbeing at the centre of all decisions and practices.

Hygiene and Everyday Health Practices

Good hygiene is a cornerstone of quality care. Under the NQF, services must maintain high standards of cleanliness and infection control. This may include daily cleaning schedules, sanitising frequently used equipment, wearing gloves for nappy changes, practising correct handwashing and following safe food-handling procedures. You may also see improvements that reflect current health guidance, such as enhanced ventilation or updated illness policies. While the specifics vary between services, the aim remains the same: to maintain a healthy environment for all children.

Responding to Emerging Issues

As the world changes, so do the risks children may encounter. The NQF requires services to regularly review and update their policies to stay informed, prepared and responsive. Our policies support safe and consistent practice in areas such as:

- Digital safety and the responsible use of technology
- Smoke-free and vape-free environments
- Sun safety and monitoring UV levels
- Safe collection procedures and clear communication with families
- Allergy and asthma management with the need for current medical management plans for children with medical conditions
- Emergency preparedness, including evacuation and lockdown procedures

These policies provide clear guidance for educators and ensure we respond to safety matters calmly and confidently. All policies are available for families to view at any time—they are displayed within the service, and copies can be requested whenever needed.

Child Protection and Wellbeing

Child protection is a major focus of the NQF. All persons working in education and care must have a valid Working With Children Check or Vulnerable Persons Check. Educators and staff understand child protection law and comprehend their mandatory reporting obligations and responsibilities in recognising concerns, responding appropriately and reporting to relevant authorities. From February 2026, all staff and educators will need to complete mandatory national child safety and protection training.

Equally important are the everyday interactions that help children feel emotionally secure—warm greetings, comfort when they’re upset, listening to their ideas and supporting them to manage emotions. Safety is not only physical; it also includes feeling valued, respected and understood.

Partnerships With Families

The NQF emphasises the importance of strong partnerships with families. Quality and safety are strengthened when educators and families work together, share information and communicate openly. This may happen through daily conversations, family events, online platforms or policy updates.

If you have questions about any aspect of child safety or practice, our team welcomes the opportunity to talk with you. Transparent communication helps us support children in the best possible way.

Continued on following page...



What This Means for You

For families, the NQF provides a consistent and reliable foundation for quality care. It means:

- Your child's service is monitored and assessed against the National Quality Standard and their quality rating must be clearly on display
- Children's safety, rights and best interests inform every decision, from room set-up to daily routines and interactions to financial decisions in the service
- Educators participate in ongoing professional learning
- Policies are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect mandatory law and regulations and current best practice
- Families can access, read and provide suggestions and feedback to policies at any time.

Most of all, it means your child spends their day in an environment purpose-built to support safety, wellbeing, learning and belonging.

Early childhood is a precious time, and families deserve to feel confident in the care their children receive. With the NQF guiding best practice and with policies kept open and accessible to families, services can provide warm, secure and nurturing experiences that help children thrive now and well into the future.



For more information on the National Quality Framework (NQF) follow this QR code.

Source: startingblocks.gov.au



For more information on the National Quality Standard follow this QR code.

Source: startingblocks.gov.au



LET'S PLAY HOPSCOTCH

Hopscotch is a simple, classic outdoor game that builds both physical skills and early maths understanding. Draw a hopscotch grid with chalk and number each square. As children hop along, encourage them to call out the numbers they land on. For extra excitement, children can toss a small stone or beanbag onto a square and collect it as they move through the course.

This playful activity helps children practise counting in sequence, recognise numerals and notice which numbers come before or after others. Seeing the numbers arranged on the ground also strengthens their sense of number relationships—such as understanding that seven is closer to nine than to one. It's an easy way to combine movement, learning and fun.

Sustainability CORNER

LUNCHBOX LOW WASTE – SIMPLE SWAPS FOR EVERYDAY MEALS



Creating a low-waste lunchbox doesn't have to be complicated. Small, consistent changes can significantly reduce single-use plastics while also saving families money over time. One of the easiest places to start is by replacing disposable items, cling wrap, sandwich bags and single-serve packets—with long-lasting alternatives.

Reusable containers in a mix of sizes make packing lunches simple and keep food fresher for longer. Beeswax wraps or silicone covers are great for sandwiches, muffins and cut fruit, offering a washable, eco-friendly option.

Buying snacks in bulk is another simple swap that reduces waste. Instead of single-serve yoghurt pouches, chips or crackers, consider filling small containers from larger tubs or packets. This approach cuts down on unnecessary packaging and gives you greater control over portion sizes and ingredients. Families can also plan ahead by prepping lunches the night before, which reduces the temptation to rely on grab-and-go packaged foods.

Adding low-waste items such as whole fruit, homemade muffins, veggie sticks or leftovers helps create a nutritious lunch while keeping waste to a minimum. Over time, children learn the value of caring for the environment through everyday habits. A low-waste lunchbox isn't about perfection, it's about simple, sustainable choices that make a big difference.

Find some delicious lunch batch recipes here:

- boobtofood.com/category/recipe/
- healthymadetasty.com.au
- healthymummy.com
- Woolworths.com.au



Focus Article: Why boredom is actually good for young children

In today's fast-paced world, boredom can feel uncomfortable for children and adults alike. With busy schedules, extracurricular activities, and screens always within reach, moments of "nothing to do" are becoming increasingly rare. When a child says, "I'm bored," it's tempting to step in straight away with an activity, a suggestion, or a device. However, boredom is not something to fear or fix. In fact, it plays an important role in children's learning and development.

Boredom gives children the time and space to think, imagine, and explore at their own pace. Without constant stimulation, children begin to look inward for ideas and outward for possibilities. This is often when creativity flourishes. A cushion becomes a mountain, a cardboard box becomes a rocket ship, and a stick becomes a magic wand. These moments of imaginative play help children develop problem-solving skills, flexible thinking, and confidence in their own ideas. Unstructured time also supports independence. When children are not directed by adults or scheduled activities, they learn to make choices for themselves. They practise deciding what to do, how to do it, and how to keep themselves engaged. These small decisions build a sense of autonomy and capability, helping children feel confident in navigating both play and everyday life.

At home, allowing space for boredom may feel challenging at first. Adults often worry that children need to be constantly entertained or productively occupied. However, children do not need expensive toys or planned activities to learn. Simple, open-ended materials are often the most powerful tools for play. Blocks, dress-ups, recycled materials, loose parts, art supplies, and everyday household items invite children to explore freely and creatively. These materials encourage experimentation and imagination rather than a "right" or "wrong" way to play.

Time spent outdoors can also transform boredom into meaningful learning. Nature offers endless opportunities for discovery, watching ants carry food, collecting leaves, splashing in puddles, or building cubby houses from sticks. Outdoor play supports physical development, curiosity, and connection to the natural world. It also allows children to experience change, risk-taking, and problem-solving in a real and engaging environment.

Boredom plays an important role in emotional development as well. Feeling bored can bring up emotions such as frustration, restlessness, or disappointment. Learning how to sit with these feelings and work through them helps children develop

emotional regulation and resilience. Over time, children begin to understand that uncomfortable feelings pass and that they have the ability to find solutions for themselves. These builds coping skills that are essential for school and life beyond the early years.

It's also important to consider the role of screens in children's experience of boredom. While digital devices can be entertaining and educational in moderation, constant access to screens can reduce opportunities for deep, imaginative play. When children are used to instant entertainment, boredom may feel more difficult to manage. Creating regular screen-free time allows children to rediscover the joy of play, creativity, and exploration without external stimulation.

In early education and care services, we value play that is child-led, open-ended, and rich in learning opportunities. Educators intentionally create environments that allow children to explore their interests, follow their curiosity, and engage in sustained play. By allowing similar opportunities at home, families can support continuity between preschool and home life, reinforcing the skills children are developing each day.

Embracing boredom does not mean leaving children unsupported. It means being present, observant, and responsive while allowing children the freedom to lead their own play. Sometimes this involves stepping back rather than stepping in trusting that children are capable of finding their own way. Over time, families often notice that children become more creative, more independent, and more confident when given space to simply be.

So next time boredom appears, try pausing before offering a solution. What may feel like "nothing happening" is often the beginning of something meaningful. In the quiet moments, children are learning, growing, and discovering who they are.



Read more about the benefits of boredom

See link via QR code
Retrieved from childmind.org

ALPHABET KABOOM!

You will need: popsicle sticks, marker and a small bucket of cup

Set up: Write each of the 26 letters of the alphabet on a different popsicle stick. Write the word "Kaboom!" on 6 additional popsicle sticks. Put all the popsicle sticks in a container, with the letters pointing down into the bucket so you can't see them.

How to Play:

1. Players take turns picking a popsicle stick out of the bucket and reading the letter on it. (Sometimes we'll also add in the challenge of saying the sound the letter makes or a word that starts with the letter.)

2. Each player collects as many popsicle sticks as possible before drawing a "Kaboom!" stick.
3. If a player draws a "Kaboom!" stick, he or she returns all his/her sticks to the bucket.
4. The winner is the player with the most sticks when time runs out (you can set a timer for as long or short as you want).

Variations:

The possibilities are endless with this game:

Family names, sight words, rhyming words (what rhymes with...?), syllables (how many syllables are in...?) basic math facts, telling time, adding money

Source: themanylittlejoys.com



HEALTH & SAFETY: Self-Care Skills: Why Doing Things “By Themselves” Matters

In the preschool years, children are learning so much more than colours, letters, and numbers. Everyday self-care skills like toileting, dressing, and eating play a powerful role in children’s development. While these tasks may seem small to adults, they are big milestones for young children and help build independence, confidence, and a strong sense of self.

When children practise self-care skills, they are learning that they are capable. Pulling up their own pants, putting on shoes, or using a spoon independently sends an important message: “*I can do this.*” Over time, these moments of success help children develop confidence, resilience, and pride in their abilities.

Toileting, Dressing and Eating: More Than Just Daily Tasks

Self-care routines are rich learning opportunities. **Toileting** supports body awareness, independence, and self-regulation. **Dressing** helps develop fine motor skills, coordination, and problem-solving. Figuring out which way clothes go or how to manage buttons and zips takes concentration and persistence. **Eating** independently builds motor control, patience, and confidence, as children learn to listen to their bodies and manage meals at their own pace.

These skills also support school readiness. Children who feel confident managing their own basic needs often transition more smoothly into group settings. They can focus more on learning and social relationships when they feel secure in their ability to care for themselves.

Independence Builds Confidence

Independence doesn’t mean children have to do everything alone. It means giving them opportunities to try, practise, and learn even when it takes longer. When adults step in too quickly, children may miss the chance to develop confidence in

their own abilities. Allowing children time to attempt tasks, make mistakes, and problem-solve builds perseverance and self-belief.

Children who are trusted to try often surprise us. They develop a sense of ownership over their routines and take pride in what they can do. Over time, this confidence carries into other areas of learning, play, and relationships.

Supporting Without Rushing

In busy family life, it’s easy to rush daily routines, but slowing down where possible can make a big difference for children. Allowing extra time for dressing, encouraging children to feed themselves, or calmly supporting toileting helps children feel capable, confident, and respected. Support may involve gentle encouragement, breaking tasks into smaller steps, or modelling rather than taking over. Phrases like “*Take your time*” or “*I’ll wait while you try*” remind children that effort matters more than speed. Remember, every child develops at their own pace, progress is gradual, and confidence grows with patience and practice.

Working Together

In early education and care services, educators support self-care skills through everyday routines. Families can reinforce this at home by providing time and opportunities for children to practise independence. These everyday moments help build confidence, resilience, and a strong belief in their own abilities.



Read more about developmental self-care skills and how to support your child

See link via QR code
Retrieved from occupationaltherapy.com.au

5 Minute MOVES KEEPY UPPY

Short simple activities to get some active minutes in the day.

This quick, high-energy game works for one child or the whole family. All you need is a single balloon. **The goal is simple:** keep the balloon in the air for as long as possible without letting it touch the ground.

Add fun variations to suit different ages: use only elbows, only knees, or one hand behind your back. Older children can try gentle taps or set a family record for longest time in the air. Try putting the sprinkler on for a really ‘cool’ challenge.

This game builds coordination, balance and teamwork, and always ends in laughter. Perfect for indoors, outdoors or days when you need a fast movement break.

5 Minute MOVES

CRAWL CHASE

When was the last time you got on your hands and knees and crawled like a baby? Give it a go, it is quite tiring and is a great brain workout too.

This activity is simple and requires no equipment just a little space. It is tag on all fours, take turns being ‘in’ everyone gets into crawling position and crawls away trying to avoid being tipped! *Have fun.*



Welcome to the Gumnuts program for 2026.

During January and February, the Gumnuts have settled beautifully into their learning environment. It has been wonderful to see the children growing in confidence as they explore the room, independently choosing toys and resources from the shelves and engaging in play that sparks their curiosity. Many of the children are forming strong, secure relationships with their educators, seeking comfort through warm hugs and shared interactions throughout the day. The children are also becoming more comfortable with their morning arrival routines, often listening as their parents give an educator a quick run through of their morning before sharing a goodbye kiss with Mum or Dad and then receiving a reassuring hug from an educator to begin their day. Lo: 1.1, 4.1

The children have also demonstrated increasing confidence in exploring their sensory skills. They have eagerly engaged in water play, splashing, pouring and watching cause and effect unfold. Experiences with slime and playdough have encouraged them to use their hands and fingers to squeeze, press and stretch, building both sensory awareness and fine motor strength. Outdoors, the Gumnuts have explored natural resources such as sand, tanbark, leaves and bark, feeling different textures and developing their understanding of the world around them. Lo: 2.4, 3.2

Recently, the children have shown a strong interest in zoo animals, which has inspired a range of engaging experiences. They explored a zoo-themed sensory tray, using their hands to feel and move different materials while discovering the animal figures within. Through creative arts, the children created zebras using collage techniques and painted tigers using orange and black paint, experimenting with colour and pattern. They further developed their manipulative skills while building with zoo Lego, carefully placing and balancing the animals. The children also explored how different zoo animals create unique prints by dipping their feet into paint and stamping them onto paper, observing the different shapes and patterns made. Lo: 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1

Alongside this, the children have become increasingly interested in pushing cars around the playroom, moving them with purpose and excitement. This interest extended into painting experiences, where the children explored using the car tyres to create tracks and patterns in paint, observing motion and cause and effect. They demonstrated growing manipulation and coordination skills while rolling cars down a ramp, watching how speed and movement changed. The children also enjoyed washing the cars in water play, engaging in meaningful, hands-on experiences. This interest was further supported through shared reading of books such as *Tip Tip Dig Dig*, *The Wheels on the Bus*, and *Down by the Station*, where the children listened, joined in with familiar songs, and connected their play to literacy experiences. Lo: 2.4, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1

The Gumnuts Educators

Wattle Room Update



We are already over one month into the year! Thank you for your continued support as the children settle into the Wattle Room. It has been a positive start, and we are proud of the growth we are seeing.

Settling In & Building Confidence

The children are becoming increasingly comfortable in their environment. Morning transitions are smoother, and many now arrive confidently and ready to explore. Strong bonds are forming with educators, and friendships are beginning to develop as children invite one another to play, sit together, and share experiences. A clear sense of belonging is emerging within the group.

Our Learning & Interests

Creative Expression

Painting has been an important part. For Australia Day and Waitangi Day, children created koalas and sheep using cotton balls and paints to explore texture and fine motor skills. During Chinese New Year, they painted the “Fu” (福) symbol in red and gold. Children are confidently selecting colours and sorting them. Concentration and sustained engagement during creative experiences continue to grow.

Music & Movement

Music remains a meaningful part of our program. The children have explored songs from different cultures, including New Zealand nursery rhymes and Chinese New Year music. They enjoy clapping, dancing, and using instruments, while building confidence during group experiences and learning to take turns and share.

Books & Early Learning

Animal, car, colour, and family-themed books support cognitive and language development, also spark curiosity and discussion. Children are pointing to pictures, naming familiar objects, imitating actions, and repeating words, strengthening early literacy and listening skills.

Culture & Community

We have introduced cultural experiences to broaden the children’s understanding of the world, including learning about New Zealand animals and songs and celebrating Chinese New Year.

As part of our daily routine, we also practise our Acknowledgement of Country by greeting the sky, the trees, each other, ourselves, the water, the land, and our animal friends. This simple and consistent routine helps the children begin to understand respect, connection, and care for the world around them. We will continue to build on these experiences and remain committed to learning about diverse cultures in meaningful, age-appropriate ways. We warmly welcome families to share traditions, celebrations, songs, stories, or recipes that are important to you.

Outdoor Exploration & Independence

Outdoor play remains a highlight. Children confidently explore the sandpit, obstacle equipment, cars, bikes, and imaginative “bus” and traffic play. They observe birds and insects, feel different leaves and grass, and greet people and dogs over the fence, strengthening their connection to nature and supporting physical development.

We are also seeing increased independence. Many children now participate in pack-up routines, manage their belongings, and help peers.

Looking Ahead

We will continue building on the children’s interests, while supporting independence, language development, and social skills.

The Wattle Educators

Welcome to the Banksia Room!



The children have settled in quickly this year and are feeling comfortable with all the educators. They are supported and comforted through that initial morning separation, helping them feel secure and ready to begin their day of learning and engaging with their peers and environment.

Over the past month, we have noticed their confidence and independence grow and shine throughout the day. During mealtime transitions, the children are learning to open and close their own lunch boxes, place their plates in the dish container, and wash their own faces using face cloths (some find it quite funny to use the mirror!). Some children have also started showing interest in toilet learning, and we continue to provide opportunities that support their increasing autonomy and self-awareness.

The children have been exploring a range of interests including colours, emotions, travel, Lunar New Year, gardens, insects and music with our visitor “Miss Sparkles”. Through hands-on experiences, they extend their understanding of the world around them. Many children are able to relate these topics to their own home experiences and confidently share their ideas with educators and peers.

At the moment, we are focusing on the theme of **“Me... Myself” — the most important person in my world!** The children have engaged in sensory painting, exploring by painting their own hands and feet. They have also been cooking different foods, sharing their likes and dislikes. These group experiences support turn-taking, pouring, stirring, making observations about changes, and sharing equipment.

Our home corner has transformed into a “shop” as we follow the children’s interest in shopping like their families. This busy and engaging space has sparked curiosity about technology such as cash registers and telephones. The children transfer and adapt their learning through play and social interactions. At this age, they enjoy exploring the concept of transferring objects from one area to another. Prams, handbags and trolleys have been especially popular for this, while educators gently guide learning around sharing and turn-taking.

Outdoors, the children have shown strong interest in bikes, climbing and jumping using the various obstacles provided. Climbing the play tower wall can be challenging, but the children demonstrate willingness to seek assistance and learn safe techniques to achieve success. The sandpit and mud kitchen continue to be areas of rich discovery. Adding water encourages curiosity, problem-solving and collaborative play as children explore natural resources together.

Our class has also started a worm farm. Through this, the children are learning to care for living things, practise being gentle, and develop an understanding of nature and sustainability. They save their food scraps each day to feed the worms, fostering responsibility and environmental awareness.

Overall, the children have settled beautifully into their new environment in the Banksia Room. They are forming strong connections with educators and building friendships with their peers. Their growing independence and sense of agency shine through as they continue to explore and express new learning.

We look forward to sharing this special time with you and your family. Please feel free to provide feedback, suggestions, or share any interests your child may develop over the coming months. This helps us connect with and extend your child’s learning, while also providing comfort and understanding when needed.

For example, moving house can be very disruptive for a two-year-old. Other life events such as welcoming a new baby or pet, a parent going on a work trip, going on a holiday, or visiting places like Questacon are all important experiences to share. Nothing is too big or too small — we value it all.

Warm regards,
The Banksia Educators



Welcome to Bluebells

Our first 2 months in Bluebells has been wonderful! It's been so pleasing to see how well most of the children have adjusted to the program confidently exploring their environment, becoming familiar with new routines, and developing positive relationships with both their educators and peers. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

In January

The Beach

We started our learning journey by exploring the beach and its surrounding environment, inspired by many children's visits to the coast over the holidays. Through various engaging experiences, the children took part in group discussions about their favourite things at the beach and what they could see there. This exploration was integrated with science and math, as the children compared and classified different types of shells by shape, pattern, colour, and size.

As we explored deeper, we focused on beach habitats and the environment, encouraging the children to think critically about how to protect the beach and the impact human actions can have on animals and creatures living there.

Exploring Seaweed

During our group discussions, many children shared what they knew about seaweed, with some even mentioning how much they enjoyed eating it. However, there were others who had never touched or tasted it before.

To satisfy their curiosity, we decided to experiment with real seaweed. Before the activity, the children learned that seaweed is a type of sea plant that doesn't have roots and comes in various shapes, sizes, and colors, depending on where it grows.

The children were fascinated when the dried seaweed expanded upon contact with water and were surprised by how soft it felt. The Bluebells did a wonderful job exploring the seaweed using their senses, identifying it as a bit slimy or sticky.

Where does sand come from?

During the beach learning journey, the children were asked many thought provoking questions to help develop their critical thinking skills, encouraging them to think beyond what they already knew. One such question was, where does sand come from? Most children immediately answered, "From the beach!" We used this as a chance to learn more about sand, including its different colours, and carried out a science experiment by striking two stones together to see how sand can be formed. After the experiment, the Bluebells eagerly collected rocks outdoors to try making sand on their own by tapping them together.

The beach dramatic play area quickly became a favourite. The children created their own beach stories, pretended to swim, relaxed "in the sun" with sunglasses, and rode imaginary waves.

In February

Lunar New Year

We began exploring the Lunar New Year as part of our intentional teaching program. As we introduced the celebration, the children discovered key Chinese traditions, including family gatherings, lion and dragon dances, and the use of fireworks. They were also excited to learn that this year is the Year of the Horse. Food became an engaging entry point into the culture. The children experimented with using chopsticks and helped prepare vegetable dumplings for afternoon tea. Making the dumplings together sparked plenty of conversation and curiosity. The dragon dance quickly became the highlight of the project. After watching videos of the performance, the children often asked to view them again. To extend their interest, we offered musical instruments and dragon masks so they could create their own version of the dance.

This project offered the children a meaningful way to connect with cultural traditions through hands-on experiences, shared exploration, and imaginative play.

Fire! Fire!

Some Bluebells were excited when they heard a loud siren on the street. They quickly gathered by the fence to catch a glimpse of the fire engine, sparking a conversation about where it was headed and what they knew about firefighters and fire engines.

This moment marked the beginning of our new learning journey. Throughout this exploration, the children will learn about fire, what it is, when it's used, and how to stay safe around it. We are also building a large cardboard fire engine, adding decorations and details each day.

Literacy, Numeracy and Name Recognition

At Bluebells, we integrate name recognition, numeracy, and literacy into our daily routines. Children practice independence by finding their own baskets and name cards, an important part of our preschool program that encourages self-reliance.

Toys

We discourage the children from bringing home toys to the Bluebells. Our classrooms are equipped with a wide variety of toys, and while we try to create a safe environment, the possibility of loss or breakage is always present. Your cooperation in this matter helps us maintain a smooth learning environment for all children.

Big Cardboard Boxes Needed

At Bluebells, we love engaging in building projects using cardboard boxes throughout the year. If you have any spare boxes that you no longer need, please consider donating them to support our creative learning experiences.

Information sharing

If your child has done anything exciting during the weekend or holidays or has achieved a particular milestone, we would like to know so that we can talk about it such an event with them. We have parents voice forms on the notice board in front of our room such as feedback, interest and fun at home. We value families input into the program about your child's development and utilise this information to extend on children's learning.

Important Reminders for the Year:

- **Label Everything:** Please ensure that all of your child's belongings are clearly labelled to avoid confusion, especially with items like shoes and socks.
- **Drink Bottles:** Drink bottles must be taken home at the end of each day for hygiene purposes. We do not wash them here.
- **Spare Clothes:** Please pack plenty of spare clothes for your child. Accidents happen, and we also enjoy messy play activities like painting and water play.
- **We have a sunscreen station set up by the door.** Please ensure your child has sunscreen applied and tick the list to let us know it's been done.

Food Safety

- Grapes should be cut in half to prevent choking hazards.
- Carrots should be steamed for children under 3 years old.
- We encourage healthy eating habits, so please be mindful of the foods you pack for your child.

The Bluebells Educators



Welcome to another year! We have all had such a wonderful start to the year with the children showing much enjoyment and enthusiasm for their transition into the Waratah room. The Waratah children have settled into the new year and their learning environment beautifully. Over the past few weeks, we have seen growing confidence, curiosity, and enthusiasm as they explore the room, build trusting relationships with their educators, and form friendships with one another.

The children have shown a strong love of sensory play, eagerly engaging in hands-on experiences that invite exploration through touch, movement, and creativity. Our learning provocations have sparked rich discussions and shared discoveries, with children extending their knowledge by listening to one another, sharing ideas, and building upon each other's thinking. It has been wonderful to see them learning together, revisiting prior knowledge, asking questions, and celebrating new understandings as a group.

Over the past few weeks, we have also been diving deeper into our ocean learning. The children have continued exploring the wonders beneath the waves, revisiting the different ocean layers and discovering more about the fascinating creatures that live within them. Through stories, discussions, creative arts, and sensory play, the children have been investigating marine animals, their habitats, and how they survive in such diverse underwater environments. This learning has encouraged curiosity, questioning, and a growing awareness of how we can care for and protect our oceans.

Alongside our ocean exploration, we have been learning more about our land, Australia. The children have been discovering the diverse animals, landscapes, and rich cultures that make our country so unique. Through maps, images, creative experiences, and conversations, we have explored deserts, rainforests, coastlines, and bushland, as well as some of the native animals that call these places home. We have also begun learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, building an understanding of connection to Country and the importance of caring for the land.

As part of this journey, we have been exploring the Aboriginal seasonal calendars and learning that many Aboriginal peoples recognise six seasons rather than four. The children have been discussing how the environment changes throughout the year — noticing shifts in weather, plant life, animal behaviours, and the land around us. This has supported the children in developing observation skills and a deeper understanding of the natural world, encouraging them to look closely at the changes happening in their own environment.

The children have also had great fun investigating and learning more about the ELSA STEM program that we have recently introduced into our curriculum. This exciting addition provides opportunities for the children to engage in hands-on STEM experiences that integrate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in meaningful and playful ways. Through ELSA, children are exploring coding concepts, problem-solving challenges, simple engineering tasks, and collaborative investigations. They are learning to ask questions, test ideas, make predictions, and work together to find solutions. The program encourages critical thinking, resilience, teamwork, and creativity as children use both technology and open-ended resources to experiment, design, build, and discover. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow as they take risks in their learning and celebrate their successes together.

We are also excited to be reintroducing our Wonder Wall in the Waratah room.

Our Wonder Wall is a special space where children and families can share something they have been enjoying learning about, wondering about, or would love to explore further. It might be a question your child has asked at home, an interest they can't stop talking about, a book they've loved, or something new they are curious to understand.

This space helps us build our program around the children's interests and inquiries. When children see their ideas valued and displayed, it strengthens their sense of belonging and encourages them to think

deeply about their own learning. It also gives us wonderful insight into what is sparking their curiosity beyond the classroom.

We warmly invite you and your child to contribute to the Wonder Wall throughout the year. You can write a question, draw a picture, add a photo, or simply share a short note. Together, we can use this space to guide meaningful investigations, projects, and learning experiences that truly reflect the voices of our Waratah children

Overall, the children are feeling settled, secure, and excited to be part of the Waratah room. We are so proud of how positively they have embraced the new year and look forward to continuing to nurture their interests and learning journey throughout the year.

Just a few general reminders:

Please make sure all your child's belongings are labelled clearly. This includes hats, all clothing, lunch boxes and drink bottles. We often have items that are the same, so clearly labelled belongings make it much easier for staff and children.

Please make sure there is plenty of spare clothing in bags. This should include undies, shorts/skirts, t-shirts and even socks.

Can we ask that you encourage your child to leave all toys at home. We have noticed lots of little trinkets, toys and even small backpacks full of bits and pieces are making their way into the room. We have previously had a no toy rule; understandably this has been relaxed over the beginning of the year as the children transition into their new room. We kindly ask that we return to this rule as it eliminates any arguments between friends, and losing toys can be most upsetting for your child. We cannot always guarantee that items will be found. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions regarding your child's time with us and what we are exploring in the room. We are always happy to have a chat. If we are busy at the time, please let us know you would like a conversation, and we can call you during the day or arrange a time for a meeting.

Thanks to everyone for a lovely start to our year — we look forward to seeing what 2026 brings!

The Waratahs Educators.

WATER COLOUR PAINTING

Watercolour painting is a gentle, expressive art activity that invites children to slow down, observe and explore. Watercolours behave differently from other paints, encouraging children to experiment and discover what happens when colours blend, dilute or layer. The soft edges and flowing textures make every attempt feel successful, even for beginners.



You will need:

Water colour palette
(Find Micador pallets at Big W)
Water colour paper (Kmart is really affordable)

Set up a simple painting space and offer prompts to spark curiosity. You might place leaves, flowers, pinecones or favourite household objects nearby for children to observe and paint. Alternatively, let their imagination lead, many children enjoy making rainbows, landscapes, or abstract patterns as they notice how the colours move across the page. Older children may enjoy trying wet-on-wet techniques, salt textures or adding details once the paint has dried.

Watercolour painting supports fine-motor development, hand-eye coordination and early artistic confidence. It also creates a moment of mindfulness, helping children unwind while focusing on gentle brush movements and colour changes.

This activity is easy to set up and pack up, soothing to engage in, and offers a beautiful opportunity for families to slow the pace and create something together.

LEFTOVERS STAMPING

Introduce children to the sensory joy of **creative stamping using everyday leftovers!** This simple, calming activity supports fine motor development, creativity, and sustainability by transforming food scraps and recycled materials into art tools.



You Will Need:

- Leftovers such as celery stumps, fruit off-cuts, bubble wrap, or small pieces of cardboard
- Paint
- Paper or cardstock
- A plate or large lid for paint
- Something to protect your workspace (newspaper or a tablecloth)

What to Do:

Set up a space ready for painting by covering the table and preparing your materials. Pour small amounts of paint onto a plate or lid and spread it slightly to make stamping easy. Laying out all materials within reach helps children work independently and confidently.

Encourage children to dip their leftover items into the paint and press them onto the paper to explore patterns, textures, and shapes. You might like to suggest using warm colours or cool colours together, this helps keep colours vibrant and avoids muddy brown tones. Allow children to experiment freely, noticing how different objects create unique prints. This open-ended approach invites creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving.