It has been another very busy month in the ELC!

We had a fantastic body awareness show talking about how to look after ourselves. We participated in Cup Cake Day for RSPCA raising $44. Thank you!

Dad’s and Grandparent’s BBQ sausage sizzle will be on Friday 11 September. It is only for children attending the ELC due to numbers in the playground, 7.30am – 8.30am activities will be set up for those special men in the children’s lives.

Tuesday 1 September we had a visit from David Fleay’s Wildlife Centre talking about caring for our animals. This is an extension from Junior Kindy room and also extending Habitat discussions that are occurring in Pre Prep 1.

Friday 18 September is Pirate Day so come dressed as a Pirate. We will be raising money for Motor Neurone Disease (MND). Please bring a donation supporting a staff member who lost a family member to this disease.

I have had a few discussions with families about Prep Readiness and the importance of PLAY. Play is the foundation of learning. It provide opportunities for children to explore, grow and learn. During play children learn about their world and how everything works. Research suggests play supports all areas of brain development as it is a highly effective and important process of learning. It allows children to discover and explore and make meaning of their world. Additionally, play promotes higher order thinking skills, sorting, classifying and recording facts and information. It assists children in making sense of situations. Creative play allows children to enhance concentration, problem solving, maths and scientific analysis, collaboration, cultural understanding, vocabulary, decision making, hand eye coordination and build muscle strength. It promotes a challenging environment; it helps restore emotional balance and allows children to use their senses; be creative and competent; it encourages children to be independent; and supports a range of play types. Play has many benefits that will support children with lifelong learning. How we address and use play is important. Children need to have time to explore and they need to feel as if they belong and are supported with no pressure.

A formalised setting, such as rote memorising letters and numbers and sitting still for long periods of time can be detrimental to the children. This could cause children to have a negative notation towards schooling. Children will not find learning enjoyable and can set them up with bad memories and experiences. We want to provide our children with a positive outlook on learning. A good way to introduce literacy and numeracy to your child is in everyday situations, such as counting cars as you are driving; writing shopping lists together and marking off the items; colour recognition at lights; and matching of cars. Another example could be at dinner time discussing the vegetables attributes such as colours and shapes. Education in the early years involves exploring with language and introducing rhyming in a fun natural way. Read lots of books and introduce new topics. Have play spaces set up at home with loose parts, objects that have been designed for a reason but can be used in a variety of ways (feel free to bring some of these items to the ELC as well).
“Creative thinking and play based learning are vital to children’s future success.” As well-known anthropologist Margaret Mead says, “Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.”

Another suggestion is to consult with professionals for assistance in early intervention. This is critical for your child’s development. Working with health professionals to assist your child in an area that needs support is critical to ensure they are ready for school and have the best start. Speech Therapist will assist with Language/Speech and Comprehension skills; Occupational Therapist for motor skills; concentration and controlling their body and being able to sit still; and Psychologist to assist with emotional regulation and behaviours.

Please feel free to discuss any concerns you may have with myself or talk to the Lead Educator’s for more information. We would like the ELC to be a shared partnership and we are here for the best interests of your child and we want them to succeed in life.

Playground Developments
We are currently working with the children to make the yard special for your children, we have planted flowers to extend children’s play and enhance senses. We will be creating a gravel pit for the children and are looking at ways to fix the area near the sandpit. Feel free to put any ideas forward that are cost effective.

Christmas Closure
The Centre will close on Friday 18 December 2015 and reopen on Monday 4 January 2016. No fees will be charged for this closure period. If your child is leaving for school please advise us of your child’s last day so we can add this information to the computer and will assist with our planning for new children to commence care.

In terms of Rooms for 2016 we are currently working on these lists. If you have not already confirmed these days please come and speak to myself or Kerrie. Rooms are looking very full which is wonderful.

Have a restful and peaceful week. Please come and talk to me about any concerns or questions as we endeavour to continually improve practice in line with St Andrews College Core Value of Personal Bests - “The Spirit of Excellence”.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 – “Whatever you do, do well”

Bronwyn Waters
ELC Director
Hello to our Families,

August has been a busy month in the Junior Kindy room. We have been working through a variety of learning opportunities as the children’s interest have been continuously changing, keeping up with their enthusiasm and supporting their need for knowledge.

We had the Ambulance visit. Thank you to Jeremy and his mum Kate for sharing this wonderful experience. The children were able to take away lots of important information and experience first hand - what it was like inside the Ambulance and equipment used. With their new knowledge they took on a range of role play scenarios within the classroom, using bandages and beds.

From last month, we have continued to support the children’s interests about pets, as we finished up our vet corner, and introduced the children to their own classroom pets. By now you must have met our 2 hermit crabs. With the children’s voice and parent support we have finally named them. The blue shell is Crusty and the gold shell is Hotrod. This experience has really been beneficial to the children’s learning about responsibility and respect for living things.

We have displayed care instructions and rules near their home, to remind the children about all the important things we need to remember when caring for a pet. Thank you to all for the support with raising money for the RSPCA and sharing our exciting animal dress up day. The children loved continuing to create their own costumes, deciding on ears and tails. As the interest about animals continues to move in and out of focus, the children’s learning was supported with a visit from Fleays Wildlife, who shared some real life animals with the children, including lizards, stick insects and a snake.

We have also been working on providing opportunities for the children to work together in small groups. Small groups allows more time for participation, a chance to reflect and challenge the children’s knowledge with open ended questions. During these group experiences, is where teacher initiated opportunities have been put into place. We have been exploring Math concepts by using scales, and experimenting with weight, and developing the children’s awareness of matching and sequence games. It’s a chance to really communicate with one another and share their knowledge and ideas.

We have been focusing on our language skills by supporting the children’s use of words by reminding them and role modelling appropriate words to use. We believe that this is a strength we can all offer the children each day, in general day to day experiences. Sharing conversations at meal times, providing time for the children to share their stories. Spend time looking at our Day Book and discuss what experiences and learning went on.

As we are speeding through the months and heading towards the end of the year, lots of friendships have started to develop throughout the class room. This is truly proving how comfortable the children have become in their environment. We have noticed the children’s confidence and attitudes starting to change as the children are all having birthdays and getting a year older and are showing an awareness of friendships and who’s friends with who. We would love you to support our learning as we have been currently explaining “We are all friends.” We have been encouraging the children to work with others in small groups, using transitions to choose a new friend and working in pairs. This has become a very positive opportunity and the children are starting to grow an understanding about the importance of others and feelings.

Thank you,

Miss Stephanie, Miss Alison, Miss Stacey and Miss Ali

REMINDERS:

• With the warmer weather approaching, please assist your child in putting sun cream on when arriving, and a hat for outside play.
• Don’t forget to sign your child in and out.
• Please use our Communication Diary on the lockers for any reminders or messages.
Dear Families,

Another month has flown by in the Pre Prep 1 room. This month we have been focusing on children’s story books and animal habitats.

The children showed an interest in puppets and to extend on this interest we have studied three children’s books; ‘Who Sank the Boat?’, ‘Meg at Sea’ and ‘The Very Cranky Bear.’ By making characters from the story into puppets the children were engaging with literacy in personally meaningful ways. To continue extending the children’s interest in the story we also discussed the setting of the story and the children made puppets based around this theme. This encouraged the children to think more deeply about the story and categorise things from the story that weren’t characters but were the setting of the story eg. the waves in the story ‘Meg At Sea.’ The children were then able to engage in dramatic and imaginative play in the puppet exploration area. In order for the children to act out the story they used the skill of sequencing, by thinking about what happened first, in the middle of the story and at the end of the story.

After the introduction of the timber yarn circle area near the Pre Prep 1 veranda outside, the children were interested in making homes for animals. The educators in the room extended this by planning experiences about animal habitats. Firstly, we learnt about three habitats; in/near water, underground and forest/grassland. As a class we then focused on each individual habitat more closely. The children were able to create the three habitats using boxes, natural materials and resources from the collage trolley. There was a lot of discussions during group times which scaffolded the children to think about what types of plants and animals were in each habitat. The children drew animals to add to the habitats. These experiences allowed the children to think about the relationships between plants and animals. It also encouraged the children’s fine motor skills through drawing the animals as well as team work and turn taking skills as each of the habitats were constructed as a group.

As you know we have been trying to improve the parent involvement within the Pre Prep 1 room. Thank you to Anisha who participated in the program by bringing in Micha’s baby brother for show and tell. The Educators would also like to say thank you to Aleisha for sharing the story ‘The Very Cranky Bear’ with the class and informing us of the show on at the Arts Centre in September. Ari, Zane, Zeke, Spencer and Sophia’s families have also brought in photos and or resources to add to the habitats which we are very grateful for.

Please continue to share with the Educators in the room and don’t hesitate to add ideas, suggestions or comments to the sticky notes provided.

We look forward to the next month in the Pre Prep 1 room!

Miss Jaime-lee, Miss Jana and Miss Sarah
Hello Families!

This month has been particularly exciting. The interest of cities has developed into a very thought provoking experience. This notion of cities first begin with the children building complex buildings and also from the Wizard of Oz, The Emerald City. We thought we would encourage this interest and provide children with a rich experience and understanding of cities.

We started by showing images of famous large cities from around the world such as, New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, London etc. We compared these with Brisbane and the Gold Coast. This is when the interest of the Q1 developed. Some of the children had previously visited the Q1 and were eager to talk about their experience. Together as a class, we emailed Q1 information and asked if they could send any information and images to us about the building. The process of emailing the company, involved discussions on what is an email; how does the email get to Q1; how do we start and finish an email; what should we say to Q1; and the beginning sounds of letters in the words we had to write. We received an email from Q1 the following day, in which they gave us interesting facts about the building and a variety of images. Thank you to the families who shared photos of the Q1 with us. The children are often looking at our Q1 photo wall.

We have also been very blessed to have Ruby H's Dad, Patrick and Maeve's Dad, Shane share how they are connected to the city. Patrick, who is a town planner discussed how his job involves planning where houses and buildings can be placed, whilst ensuring our environment is protected. Shane who is a landscape architect, talked to the children about how the garden provides life to animals. The children also had an opportunity to plant their own plants with Shane’s assistance. Shane and Patrick’s visit has led to much discussion on the importance of having ‘green’ in the world. The children are particularly concerned about the animals and that they will not be able to live without nature. We have been encouraging the children that they can make a difference by simply looking after the gardens. It is exciting to see the children start to understand the impact cities can have on the environment but more so, that they can make a difference.

The theme of the cities will continue and progress until the children become disinterested. We have and will provide your children with an array of learning opportunities through this experience. We appreciate the support you have shown us this month, especially in regards to the Q1 photos, bringing in certain recycled goods, show and tells and parents coming in to share.

Thank you all,

Miss Jess, Miss Mardi and Miss Shelley