Welcome From Our President

Welcome to 2013 and a very big welcome to all those families and friends who are joining the Ascot Kindergarten community for the first time. We also have many families who are returning to our kindergarten, and we are thrilled that you are back.

We are already at the end of first term, and I hope your children have settled into the kindergarten experience and are enjoying their time with the educators and their friends.

Our educators are very generous with their time, and are always happy to help and answer the questions of parents – and our committee is the same. Don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it, or ask a question when needed.

The kindergarten years are a busy time for families with drop-offs and pick-ups, and all sorts of special events, plus requests from our committee. But it is an enjoyable and lovely time for families, with the opportunity to be really involved in your child's education. We value your contribution as we try to teach the children that family and community are an essential part of a happy life.

Our first event for the year was the annual Welcome BBQ which provided a chance for parents, guardians and families to come together and get to know each other and the educators, while relaxing within the kindergarten surrounds with a lovely BBQ dinner. Thank you to our kinder families for your attendance and support.

If during the year you can volunteer even a small amount of time to help out in the kinder, or at working bee or social event, it will be greatly appreciated.

All the best for 2013, and may there be many happy memories for us all.

With warmest regards,

Karen Lyon

Annual Ascot Kinder Welcome BBQ

On behalf of the Fundraising Team, we'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the evening, with special note to the face painters who brought joy and excitement to all the children who participated.

Without the generosity of local businesses and our Ascot Kinder community, the evening, particularly the raffle, wouldn't have been the success that it was.

Here are just some of the stars who shone through for us: Bridgid Ryan, Rochelle Anderson, Maple Gallery Photography, Paramount Health & Fitness Club, Lisa Melina Brow & Beauty Boutique, Centre for Mind & Movement, Riverside Golf & Tennis Centre, 3P Learning, Blue Illusion Moonee Ponds, just to name a few. Thank you!

We'd also like to mention Porterhaus Meats in Moonee Ponds for providing tasty sausages and hamburgers at a great price, and Larder Fresh who generously donated half of the veggie burgers, plus gave us a great price for the rest.

A very special thank you to our dedicated Fundraising Team who spent many hours approaching businesses for raffle donations, and organising all the wonderful food and equipment for the night.

And a huge thank you to all the parents who volunteered their time setting up, serving, cooking and packing up – it was a big effort, but much appreciated!

We hope all who attended enjoyed the evening, and getting to know our kinder community.

Sophia Karanatsios and Shannon Phelps
FROM THE COORDINATOR

Term 1 Reflection

Welcome everyone to Ascot Kinder for 2013!!

It’s hard to believe we are already at the end of the first term. The weather has been mostly beautiful which makes such a difference to the ambience in our sessions, and also means that we can better facilitate our indoor/outdoor program. Also, sun just seems to make everyone feel happier!

What a fabulous team of educators we have! Katie, Jenny, Megan, Vikki, Lida and myself are looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

I am very pleased to welcome Tara Usher to the crew as our Administration Officer. Tara has had an association with the kinder for many years and will be a huge asset. Her wealth of experience and knowledge is invaluable, and she is a huge support to the team.

This first term, although a short one, has been a very busy start to the year. The focus has been on children and families familiarising themselves with the kinder environment and community, and getting to know the educators and peers in their respective groups. We have a mix of families that know the kinder and its history well, and new families who bring with them fresh ideas and perspectives, as well as questions about how everything works.

Communication is something we are improving on all the time, and there are many ways to find the information you need. Katie and I send out regular emails, plus we provide program information and documentation of children’s learning via the reflection books. Our educators are readily available to discuss questions, concerns and children’s development; and there are many opportunities to talk to other families and share your knowledge and experiences.

Our recent Ascot Kinder Welcome BBQ was a great way for families to get to know each other and chat to the educators in a less formal way. It was also a lovely way for the children to develop positive, fun feelings towards the kinder and start to learn about belonging to a wider community. We had a great turnout this year, and were once again lucky with the weather. I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the Fundraising Committee who organised the event, and all the wonderful volunteers who helped with the preparations, plus those who helped out on the night.

We have a fabulous new Parent Committee of Management – led by Karen Lyon, our President for the second year in a row – and I am very much looking forward to working with them this year.

Last year was a busy time for the early childhood sector, and in order for us to stay on top of things this year we have had to hit the ground running, as the saying goes. Throughout the year there will be many projects on the go, and always lots to do behind the scenes.

I hope all families have a great Term 1 break, and we look forward to seeing you all again, refreshed and ready for a fun Term 2!

Stephanie Yeend

BLUE GROUP BANTER

After easing into things at the beginning of the year with short orientation sessions and small groups, the children are now well and truly into the swing of the kinder routine. Everyone is settling in at their own pace, and eager to explore the new environment in their own way.

The group seem very happy to engage in experiences that interest them, and are starting to get the hang of the kinder routine, including packing up for group time.

*Where Is the Green Sheep* has been a popular story choice, with many children already familiar with the book. And, as expected, the song “Mr Clickey Cane” – a timeless Peter Combe classic – provided much cause for loud giggling and humorous facial expressions! Not surprisingly, music, dancing and dressing up have been observed as strong interests.

Our Spiny Leaf insects are well loved in our Blue Group sessions, with a few children ensuring they receive regular “cuddles” and are kept well hydrated.

Sensory experiences like water play, sand play, play dough and finger painting are engaging the children, and provoking thought and communication.

Confidence is building as we go along, and many in the group are now happy to say goodbye to family members and assert some independence. This can be difficult for parents especially when you are leaving them for the first time, but is all part of children “growing up” – and shows us that they feel safe, comfortable and secure in the kinder setting, which is exactly what we all want.

We have celebrated a number of children’s birthdays this term, which is always very special. And with some children turning three, this marks the beginning of their independent journey at kinder, when they can attend without a parent/guardian. For some children this is a smooth transition, and for others this can be a big adjustment. It is important to remember that each child in the group is experiencing kinder differently, and each child and family has different needs, skills, strengths and abilities.

I’m looking forward to seeing these personalities emerge over the year!

Steph
GREEN GROUP GOSS

After easing into things at the beginning of the year with short orientation sessions and small groups, the children are now well and truly into the swing of the kinder routine. Everyone is settling in at their own pace, and eager to explore the new environment in their own way.

The ingredients for Green Group this year include many children from last year’s Blue Group, a few from last year’s Red Group, and a couple from last year’s 4-year-old program with some fabulous newbies tossed in. This fantastic mixture allows for a lot of follow-on and revisiting experiences, plus a lot of child-to-child teaching and learning, and heaps of independent and collaborative exploration and engagement.

We have been able to breeze through a lot of the introductions and explanations and dive straight into play and learning, and talking about our interests. Newer children are quickly picking up on what happens at kinder by watching others and reading the scene.

I am very familiar with many of the children in the group, which means I have strong foundations to build relationships upon, and allows me to spend a little extra time with those who are new. Jenny and Megan are quickly learning personalities, needs and interests, and are developing positive connections with the children.

Many children in Green Group are already taking a strong interest in and demonstrating such care and responsibility for our kinder garden. Recently, new seeds and seedlings have been planted in pots and garden beds, and children have been helping to water and tend to the plants, especially on the hot days we have had throughout this term.

Imaginative and socio-dramatic play (role playing / character play), sensory play (play dough, water, sand, mud), music and dancing, plus show and tell have all been popular experiences this term amongst the children in Green Group. The children are continuously exploring their individual and unique identities and interests, and becoming more confident with expressing these interests to their peers and educators.

Roar Like A Dinosaur!!

Following on from strong interest in dinosaurs in Blue Group last year, as well as drawing on our knowledge of common children’s interests, we organised an incursion for our 4-year-olds nice and early in the year.

On Wednesday 13th February, Sally from the Melbourne Museum presented their Dinosaur and Fossil Program at our kinder. What a great way to kick start the year!

It was a fun, interesting and interactive presentation which involved all of the children’s participation.

I look forward to seeing the children’s personalities and interests grow and develop throughout the year!

Steph
THE RED GROUP RUNDOWN

What a fantastic start to 2013 for Red Group!

Vikki and I have been thoroughly enjoying getting to know everyone, and what a lovely bunch you are!

Many of our group will be turning three later in the year, which means we have had lots of enthusiastic parent helpers to assist in our group. It has been great to see so many parents getting involved in play, and singing along merrily to our group time songs.

We have had beautiful weather throughout Term 1, and everyone in Red Group has been making the most of the sunshine with lots of outdoor play. The trains passing the kindergarten have provided a source of endless wonder and interest for the children, with lots of excited voices yelling out and waving as the trains pass by.

The children in Red Group have been gaining confidence in the kinder environment and are starting to explore areas independently. Painting in the indoor and outdoor areas has been a major area of interest with many children finding it a nice way to relax into the kinder session. Our musical marble tree is another popular item, with many children enjoying this experience with their parent/guardian at the start of the session.

I have been lucky enough to take many exciting “car rides“ with the children. A truck tyre and a wooden steering wheel have become our vehicle of choice, taking us to fantastic places such as the supermarket, the jungle, under the sea, and the train station. Everyone has been careful to buckle their seat belts “click-clack” and make sure to stop at red lights, go at green lights and slow down at orange lights.

The children in Red Group have also been engaging in a variety of sensory play including play dough, water, mud, sand and hand-painting. The exploration of different materials is an important part of children exploring their world and the environment, and assists them with developing a vocabulary to describe, sounds, sights, textures and smells.

Our group times are coming along nicely with the children adjusting to the idea of sitting alongside their peers to sing songs and listen to stories. Popular songs include “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”, “Open, Shut Them”, “Mr Cicketty Cane”, and “Galumph, went the little green frog”.

Well, it has been a great Term 1, and I hope everyone has enjoyed it as much as I have!

Katie
YELLOW GROUP NEWS FLASH

Well, it’s been a busy, fun and exciting start to the year in Yellow Group!

We have welcomed many new families to Yellow Group this year, and it’s been fantastic to see so many happy, smiling faces. I’m also very excited to welcome back members of last year’s Red, Blue and Green Groups – it’s incredible how much everyone has grown over the holidays!

With so many new faces, the children in Yellow Group have been taking their time to get to know one another. It has been wonderful to witness children discovering mutual interests with their peers, and sharing smiles of friendship.

For Yellow Group, the large number of new children means that settling in and building relationships is one of the most important parts of this term. I am so pleased to see an emerging confidence and self-assurance in everyone this term, and I look forward to seeing children explore a little bit more each day.

The emerging interests observed for Yellow Group over the past few weeks have included:

Construction: Yellow Group may have some budding architects and builders, as I have seen some incredible block houses in the outdoor area. One last week had four rooms and a door mat to wipe your feet on! The children are building confidence in their ability to construct safe, stable structures without the need for adult assistance.

Bikes: Many of Yellow Group are enthusiastic bikers, zooming around the outdoor yard on our tricycle bikes and challenging their gross motor abilities. Many children are using pedals for the first time. With so many keen cyclists and only three bikes, taking turns has been another important learning experience, and the children have been helping to monitor each other’s turns using a timer.

Water: There has been hot weather throughout this term, and water play has been one of our most popular interests. I’m pleased to see how conscious the children are of the needs of our plants, eagerly watering the plants with our watering cans on a daily basis. Children have been helping each other to use the water tap on our rainwater tank, and this peer-to-peer support has been an important element of building relationships with others.

Dinosaurs: After the wonderful dinosaur incursion from the Melbourne Museum earlier this term (see pictures, below), the children have been consistently using dinosaurs in their play. However, the “dinosaurs” have been taking on many different roles, from babies in houses to ladies at tea parties, and even stampeding monsters knocking planes out of the sky!

Show and Tell: The children in Yellow Group instigated Show and Tell a few weeks ago and it has been a roaring success! The smaller group size for Show and Tell has made for a lovely atmosphere where children can talk without the pressure of standing in front of the whole kinder group. We often just sit in a circle, and the children take their turns “showing and telling”, and asking questions. We look forward to continuing Show and Tell into Term 2.

That’s it from me for now. I hope everyone has a lovely holiday. And I am thoroughly looking forward to Yellow Group in Term 2!

Katie