



Euroa Kindergarten Annual Report 2017

At the beginning of the year we focused on settling the children into their environment and assisting them to feel supported and secure. The children quickly settled into the programs and started to communicate and form links with each other and establish new friendships. Something that is very important for the Euroa Kindergarten is to show respect for ourselves, each other and the learning environment. The children quickly adapted to these concepts and began to demonstrate these in their daily practice.

Our play-based program allows children to learn through hands on experiences and they are free to choose from a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities based upon their interests and skill level. Although mostly play-based, there are some structured activities, increasing in length and complexity as the year progresses, with the expectation that children will participate to their developmental level. The focus is on children's learning through process and discovery and not on the end product.

The program is designed around the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and caters for all areas of development: language and communication development, social development, cognitive development, fine and gross motor development, and encourages creativity and imagination.

Nature has always been a big part of our programs and this year, our Red Groups Bush kinder sessions returned in Term 2. Once a month they visited the Euroa Arboretum for a whole day to engage and learn about nature and freely explore the different areas of the arboretum with mud being an all-time favourite thing to explore. Cathy Olive the Project manager at the Euroa Arboretum has been a wonderful mentor to the program, she is full of contagious enthusiasm and a wealth of information and ideas and we would sincerely like to thank her for her commitment to the Bush Kinder program. The success of our Bush kinder

program has inspired and enthused Ann to follow suit and in 2018 both 4 year old groups will be attending Bush Kinder starting again in Term 2.

Other aspects of our program have included exploring the interdependency between humans and all living things including plants, insects and waste. We have learnt about reducing waste and recycling, observed water flows, and observed shadows and shapes in our environment. When Autumn came we looked closely at the changing colours of the leaves and collected a variety of leaves from the Sevens Creek Park, to use in art projects. Some of the children engaged in some life drawing and reproduced images of the leaves they had collected.

We have discussed and acknowledged diversity amongst people and cultures including the cultures of children in our group, and learnt some familiar words in French, Italian, and Japanese. We became familiar with the concept of length, height and size; looking at things that are big, medium and small which was reinforced by the stories, 'The 3 Billy Goats Gruff' and 'Goldilocks and the 3 Bears' and measuring people and objects in our room. Music and movement, yoga and guided relaxation sessions have also been part of our program and have provided children with the opportunity to become aware of their bodies; how they move and react to different beats, how they react to different exercises and how they can train their mind and body to be still and calm. Storytelling with props, the treasure box and story time at the Arboretum and at the Euroa library, have provided children with opportunities to build their expressive and receptive language skills as well as enabling children to develop their sense of identity and belonging, and establish home/kindergarten links.

Our celebrations this year have included Harmony week, Easter, and Special Person's Evening. Our usual Winter Lantern Parade was once again well attended and was a highlight for the children who walked the perimeter of the kindergarten parading their colorful lanterns followed by a mug of soup with family and friends afterwards.

We have had several visitors throughout the year which furthers children's understanding of the world in which they live. We were fascinated by the prehistoric bones of a Tsintosaurus and various fossils from the Melbourne Museum and we discovered amazing facts about Australian reptiles and animals with the Reptile encounters show. These activities provided

children with an opportunity to gain new insights into nature and have contact with creatures they may otherwise never encounter.

Throughout the year we encouraged the children to listen and communicate with each other and this was done through the provision of song, stories, and social activities, turn taking games, puppets and cooperative learning experiences where children could practice these skills. By doing this the children have developed their language and communication abilities, along with life skills such as respecting each other and being able to understand the perspectives of others. We have also encouraged the children to ask questions, share their thoughts, ideas and choose where and what they want to play with, as well as add their own ideas to the program. By doing this we are encouraging the children to respect individual differences, work collaboratively and develop a sense of belonging and ownership, which we believe is a vital aspect of children's development.

As part of the transition to school program we visited the Euroa Primary school and St. Johns Primary school and spent some time with the Foundation students at each school. The foundation students from the Euroa Primary school have then visited us. These visits have assisted the children to become more familiar with some of the children and the schools they will be attending in the coming year.

At the end of the year Sue Walker decided it was time to say goodbye and retire. She spent 13 years at the Euroa Kinder, providing unconditional care to all within the kinder- children, families, and staff. We thank Sue for all the years she dedicated to the Euroa Kindergarten and for sharing her warmth and care towards all those that walked through our doors, thank you Sue.

We would like to thank our colleagues Robyn Howard, and Jody Delahey for their support, assistance, dedication, contributions and their fantastic enthusiasm they have for their work. We would also like to thank all the families and children at Euroa Kindergarten for their support, whether its being on the committee and or, assisting with the many tasks associated with operation of the kindergarten. We would also like to thank GRPSA and our GRPSA colleagues for their support and sharing of ideas. Thank you.

Katie Long & Ann Watkins