



A.B. Paterson College

Banjo and Friends

Early Childhood Centre
Newsletter

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Important Dates

- 4 May – Labour Day (Service Closed)
- 5 May – Wombats Mother's Day Celebration
- 6 May – Lorikeets Mother's Day Celebration
- 7 May – Kangaroos Mother's Day Celebration
- 12 May – Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Show

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Welcome to our April Newsletter!

As part of our Service's commitment to quality improvement and the delivery of quality education and care programs, we have the responsibility to build and maintain a skilled and engaged workplace.

The field of early childhood education is constantly evolving, with new research on topics such as brain development, behaviour management, curriculum design, and inclusive practices emerging regularly. Professional development ensures educators stay updated with the latest evidence-based strategies, enabling them to apply modern techniques that better support child development.

Professional development is also used to develop knowledge and skills in identified areas. Children thrive in environments led by knowledgeable, confident educators. Professional development empowers teachers to improve classroom practices, better understand child behaviour, and deliver more engaging and effective learning experiences which leads to more nurturing, stimulating, and responsive care.

Service staff can engage in professional development through informal methods such as networking with other professionals, staff meetings and personal reading or through formal methods such as attending training, workshops, conferences or through mentoring.

As you're aware, we close our Early Learning Services multiple times throughout the year to engage our educators in training relevant to our Services. During the designated professional development days we've had so far this year, our staff participated in annual refresher courses on food safety, sun safety, and chemical safety. Additionally, they have also attended specialised workshops focused child safety, social and emotional wellbeing, and national framework learning.

We look forward to the remaining allocated professional development days in 2026 where we'll engage with compliance topics such as more in-depth child safety training, safe sleeping, and fire and emergency training, as well as specialised themes such as complex trauma and attachment, and curriculum planning. These dates are scheduled for 19 June, 18 September, and 4 December.

National Quality Standard 7.2.3 – Development of Professionals
A.B. Paterson College Strategic Intent Pillar 1 – Educational Excellence

Tegan Carroll
Banjo and Friends Centre Manager

Kangaroos Classroom

Creative arts play a significant role in early childhood education, offering children meaningful opportunities to explore, express and make sense of their world. Rather than being viewed as isolated activities, the arts are embedded within play-based learning and contribute to children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. Drawing on contemporary frameworks such as the Early Years Learning Framework and the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline, as well as theoretical perspectives from Lev Vygotsky and Loris Malaguzzi, creative arts can be understood as essential to supporting children's holistic learning.

Dramatic play, such as hospital role play, provides a rich context for social interaction and decision-making. In this environment, children assume roles including doctors, nurses and patients, engaging in dialogue, negotiating ideas and demonstrating empathy. These interactions align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which positions learning as a socially mediated process that occurs through interaction with others. Through shared play experiences, children develop language, perspective-taking and problem-solving skills. Such experiences also support Outcome 1 and Outcome 3 of the Early Years Learning Framework, as children build a strong sense of identity and wellbeing through belonging, confidence and positive relationships.

Visual arts experiences, such as the autumn tree group activity using cotton pads and watercolours, further support children's capacity for expression and exploration. In this context, children engage in sensory-rich processes, experimenting with colour, texture and technique. Malaguzzi's concept of the "hundred languages of children" emphasises that children communicate their thinking through multiple symbolic forms, including art. By focusing on the process rather than the final product, children are encouraged to explore creativity, take risks and represent their ideas in diverse ways. These experiences align with Outcome 4 of the Early Years Learning Framework, where children are described as confident and involved learners who develop dispositions such as curiosity, creativity and persistence.

Similarly, the raining cloud painting experience integrates creative arts with early scientific inquiry. Using tools such as droppers and cotton balls, children explore the movement and behaviour of water, observing cause and effect while developing fine motor control.



Kangaroos Classroom

This form of hands-on, inquiry-based learning reflects an integrated approach to development, where cognitive, physical and language skills are strengthened simultaneously. Children's verbal descriptions and predictions during the activity also support Outcome 5 of the Early Years Learning Framework, as they become effective communicators who express ideas and build understanding through language.

Collaborative art experiences, such as constructing the water cycle using recycled materials, highlight the importance of social learning and environmental awareness. In this group context, children share ideas, negotiate roles and contribute to a collective outcome. This reflects the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline's emphasis on connectedness, where children develop an understanding of their relationship with others and the environment. Through engagement with sustainable materials, children also begin to develop early awareness of environmental responsibility, further extending their learning beyond the immediate experience.

Overall, creative arts experiences provide a holistic approach to early childhood education by integrating multiple domains of development within meaningful and engaging contexts. Socially, children learn to collaborate and build relationships. Emotionally, they develop confidence and resilience. Physically, they refine fine motor and coordination skills. Cognitively, they engage in inquiry, problem-solving and critical thinking. The integration of theoretical perspectives and curriculum frameworks ensures that these experiences are intentional and responsive to children's interests and developmental needs.

In conclusion, creative arts are a vital component of early childhood education, supporting children to become confident, capable and connected learners. Through intentional planning informed by theory and frameworks, educators can create rich learning environments where children's creativity is valued and their holistic development is enhanced.

Jingjing Zhang | Kangaroos Early Childhood Teacher



Lorikeets Classroom

This month in the Lorikeets classroom, we have been intentionally exploring boundaries in early childhood - a vital part of children's social and emotional development. Through play, conversations, stories, songs, and everyday interactions, we are supporting the children to build an understanding of their own boundaries and how to respect the boundaries of others.

The early years are a critical time for children to develop a strong sense of self, belonging, and emotional wellbeing. Learning about boundaries helps children to:

- Understand consent and body autonomy
- Develop confidence to express their needs and feelings
- Build empathy and respect for others
- Navigate friendships and social situations
- Feel safe, secure, and in control of their environment

When children experience clear, consistent, and respectful boundaries, they are better able to regulate their emotions, form positive relationships, and develop a strong sense of identity. In the Lorikeets classroom, learning about boundaries is embedded throughout our daily program in meaningful and age-appropriate ways. We have been reading a range of stories that explore feelings, personal space, friendships, and respectful interactions. These stories open up opportunities for rich group discussions where children reflect on characters' choices, emotions, and actions.

You may hear questions such as:

- "How do you think they felt?"
- "What could they say instead?"
- "What would you do if that happened to you?"

These conversations support children to develop empathy, perspective-taking, and problem-solving skills.

Music is a powerful way for children to understand and remember concepts. We have been engaging in songs and movement experiences that reinforce ideas such as using gentle hands, listening to our bodies, respecting personal space, and stopping and starting (self-regulation). Games that include "stop and go," freeze dances, and turn-taking activities help children practise self-control and awareness of others in fun and engaging ways.

Much of our learning around boundaries happens naturally during play. As educators we intentionally support children to ask before joining in play, use language such as "Can I play?" or "Please stop", recognise and respond to others' cues, take turns and share space, and work through conflicts with guidance



Lorikeets Classroom

Children learn so much from the adults around them. As educators' we model respectful language and interactions every day, using phrases such as:

- "It's okay to say no thank you."
- "Let's check if our friend is comfortable."
- "We use gentle hands with our friends."
- "I can see you need some space."

We provide calm, quiet spaces within the classroom where children can go when they need time to regulate, rest, or have space. This supports children to recognise their own needs and respond to them in a positive way. Our approach is grounded in warm, respectful relationships and consistent expectations. We aim to balance clear boundaries with opportunities for children to make choices and develop independence.

Research highlights that children thrive when they experience this balance - where adults provide structure and safety, while also supporting children's voice, agency, and autonomy. This helps to build secure attachments, emotional resilience, and confidence.

Families play a vital role in supporting your child's understanding of boundaries. Some simple and effective ways to continue this learning at home include:

- Respect your child's voice - Allow them to say "no" (when safe and appropriate)
- Use clear and simple language - "Your body belongs to you"
- Model respectful relationships - Show listening, empathy, and calm responses
- Practise social language - "Can I have a turn?" "Please stop"
- Acknowledge feelings - "I can see you're upset, that's okay"
- Offer choices within limits - "Would you like the red shirt or the blue one?"

We will continue to build on this important learning through stories, role-play, group discussions, music, and everyday experiences. These skills are deeply connected to children's wellbeing, relationships, and sense of belonging. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in your child's learning journey. Together, we are helping to nurture respectful, confident, and emotionally aware little learners. If you would like to chat more about how we support boundaries in the classroom, please feel free to reach out anytime.

"Every child deserves to feel safe in their body, confident in their voice, and respected in their choices."

Kristy Chapman
Lorikeets Early Childhood Teacher



Wombats Classroom

Outdoor play is not simply a break from learning indoors; it is a vital context where children grow physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively.

I am a strong believer in the value of spending time outdoors. Growing up in Finland, we were sent outside to play between lessons every day, even in very cold weather. With the right clothing, children adapted quickly. What stood out was how deeply engaged we were in play. The cold faded into the background as our bodies moved, our imaginations took over and friendships developed. When we returned indoors, we were calmer, more focused and ready to learn. This experience reflects what research now clearly shows: children's bodies and brains are not designed for long periods of stillness. Movement and play support regulation, wellbeing and learning.

International research, including findings shared by UNICEF, shows that children today are spending less time outdoors than ever before. This decline is more pronounced for some groups, including girls, children living in urban environments and children from minority backgrounds. As children grow older, outdoor play often decreases further, despite the fact that children of all ages benefit from regular, meaningful outdoor experiences. At the same time, evidence highlighting the importance of outdoor play for children's development continues to grow. Studies consistently link outdoor play with improved physical health, stronger social skills, better concentration and increased school readiness.

One clear benefit of outdoor play is increased physical activity. The World Health Organisation recommends that children aged one to four years engage in at least three hours of physical activity each day, while children aged five to seventeen years should have at least one hour of vigorous physical activity daily. Many children do not meet these recommendations due to increased screen time and sedentary routines. Outdoor play naturally encourages running, climbing, jumping, balancing, throwing and imaginative movement, supporting cardiovascular health, strength and coordination.

Spending time in natural and green spaces offers additional benefits. Research shows that play in environments such as gardens, bushland and natural playgrounds can reduce stress, improve focus and support emotional resilience. Children in these environments are more likely to cooperate with others, engage in meaningful conversations and use their creativity to invent games and solve problems together. Outdoor play also provides opportunities for safe risk taking.



Wombats Classroom

Activities such as climbing, balancing or jumping from a height help children learn to assess risk, build confidence and develop problem solving skills while strengthening their bodies and minds.

Outdoor play also supports children's wellbeing in quieter ways. Time spent outdoors has been linked to reduced stress and improved mental health. Exposure to natural light may support healthy eyesight, and small amounts of sunlight help boost vitamin D levels. Outdoor play often involves mess, exploration and sensory experiences, all of which are valuable for learning and enjoyment.

Outdoor learning is strongly aligned with both the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline and the Early Years Learning Framework Version 2. Outdoor play supports children's wellbeing, active learning, connectedness and identity through play based, holistic learning experiences.

In the Wombats classroom, we are fortunate to have many opportunities for outdoor play. Weather permitting, children gather outside during morning drop off and afternoon pick up times. We also schedule two dedicated outdoor play sessions each week, offering both free play and organised experiences in our beautiful outdoor learning environment. We observe children inventing games, exploring with their senses, relaxing, socialising and using their bodies as they climb, balance, dig and move. These moments are invaluable and a joy to witness. Our structured PE sessions with Mrs Mitchell further support physical skill development, teamwork and confidence.

How you can encourage outdoor play at home:

- Playing in the backyard
- Visiting a local park for play or a picnic
- Watering plants in the garden or on a balcony
- Going for a forest, bush, or beach walk
- Playing outdoor games such as soccer

Miia Summersfield
Wombats Early Childhood Teacher



Outside School Hours Care

Our April Vacation Care program was an absolute joy from start to finish! Over two exciting weeks, our children enjoyed a wide range of engaging activities that encouraged creativity, movement, social connection, and plenty of smiles. Every day brought new opportunities for learning, laughter, and fun, and the children embraced it all with enthusiasm.

Our program was filled with creative arts and crafts experiences that encouraged the children to explore their imaginations and express themselves freely. From colourful creations to hands-on projects, the children took pride in their artwork, shared ideas with each other, and built confidence in their creative abilities.

Swimming sessions with the fantastic Mr Gee were a huge highlight of the program. The children enjoyed splashing, learning, and building water confidence in a safe and supportive environment, while celebrating personal achievements and encouraging one another in the pool.

Our incursions were requested by the children, and they loved every one of them! Mini golf brought plenty of laughter and friendly competition, helping the children to develop coordination, patience, and sportsmanship. Our gymnastics sessions kept everyone active and energised, encouraging flexibility, balance, and confidence as children challenged themselves and celebrated their progress.

Our multicultural dancing sessions were a wonderful celebration of diversity and inclusion. Through music and movement, children explored different cultures, learnt new dance styles, and enjoyed sharing experiences together in a fun and respectful environment.

The Comic Express workshop incursion filled the room with laughter and creativity. Children explored comedy, storytelling, and performance, building confidence as they followed step by step instructions to create Manga Monster characters. It was fantastic to see children supporting each other and stepping outside their comfort zones.



Outside School Hours Care

Scooter Day was full of excitement as children zoomed around the basketball courts, developing balance and coordination while practicing safe riding skills. Messy Day was a favourite for many with children loving the freedom to explore the different textures of Oobleck and shaving foam, engage their senses, and fully immerse themselves in messy, hands-on fun!

Cookie decorating gave children the chance to be creative (and deliciously so!), carefully designing their funny face cookie before enjoying them together. Movie days provided a chance to relax and unwind in a calm, cosy setting while sharing quiet time with friends.

Outdoor play was a big part of our program, supporting physical activity, teamwork, and cooperative play. Throughout the two weeks, we saw beautiful friendships form, confidence grow, and children actively practicing inclusion, kindness, and collaboration.

We truly saved the best for last with our annual OSHC's Got Talent Show! The children amazed us with their courage, creativity, and confidence as they showcased their incredible talents. From dancing and singing to comedy and magic performances, every child was celebrated and cheered on. The room was filled with encouragement, applause, and pride, it was a perfect way to finish an unforgettable Vacation Care.

We are so proud of the positive, inclusive, and supportive environment created by our children and educators throughout April Vacation Care. Thank you to our wonderful families for your continued support. We loved sharing these special moments and can't wait to welcome everyone back for our next Vacation Care adventure!

Bec Rogers | OSHC Coordinator



Building Resilience in the Early Years

As part of my role as Educational Leader, I actively support and encourage educators to engage in ongoing professional development that strengthens our practice and benefits children's wellbeing. Recently, our educators participated in the Be You online training focused on building resilience and supporting children's mental health and wellbeing. This professional learning has enhanced educators' understanding of how resilience develops in the early years and reaffirmed the importance of safe, supportive relationships and emotionally responsive environments.

Following this training, educators have been able to collaboratively reflect on how these strategies can be transferred into everyday practice. This process also highlights the areas in which educators demonstrate strong and effective practice. Educators are intentionally supporting children to recognise and name emotions, use calming strategies, problem-solve challenges, and build confidence when faced with new or difficult situations.

This approach directly aligns with EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing, as educators promote emotional awareness, self-regulation, and a sense of security and belonging. Through consistent, reflective practice, our team is creating nurturing learning environments where children feel supported to develop resilience and wellbeing skills that will benefit them now and into the future.

Parents can support resilience by talking with children about their feelings, helping them name emotions, and reassuring them that it is okay to feel challenged at times. Encouraging children to try again when something feels difficult, allowing time to problem-solve, and praising effort rather than outcomes helps build confidence and persistence. Modelling calm responses, using routines, and working through challenges together also supports children to manage emotions and develop coping strategies. When children receive consistent messages from both home and the centre, they feel more secure and supported to build resilience and wellbeing.

Tegan Findlay
Educational Leader

What's On in Our Community

Broadwater Pavilion Markets



Set against the stunning backdrop of the Broadwater, with live music, family-friendly lawn games, and a pet-friendly atmosphere.

Entering its fourth successful year on the Gold Coast, the Broadwater Pavilion Markets have become a staple for locals and visitors seeking the perfect Saturday morning. Nestled on the scenic Fisherman's Lawn within the Broadwater Parklands, this monthly seaside market brings together the best of the region's makers, bakers, and creators.

Experience a vibrant atmosphere filled with salty air and community spirit. Whether you're a foodie, a fashionista, or just looking for a family outing, there's something for everyone.

- Artisan Stalls: Boutique fashion, handcrafted jewellery, and unique home treasures.
- Live Music: Relax by the Broadwater to the sounds of talented local musicians.
- Family Fun: Free kids' craft areas and lawn games to keep the little ones entertained.
- Pet Friendly: Bring your four-legged friends along for a stroll by the water!

Pro Tip: Make a day of it! Once you've finished browsing the stalls and feasting at one of our many food trucks, take advantage of the world-class parkland facilities, including the Rockpools water playground and jumping pillow.

Getting there: Consider using public transport or active travel. Plan your trip with [Translink's journey planner](#). Parking may be limited. For metered parking, use the EasyPark app to start, end, and extend your parking direct from your phone to avoid fines. For more information visit [City of Gold Coast's Parking page](#).

Price: Free

When: Saturday, 16 May from 8:00am to 2:00pm

Where: Fisherman's Lawn, Broadwater Parklands, Marine Parade, Southport, 4215

Screen Time and Children's Sleep

Your child needs enough good-quality sleep so they can play, learn and concentrate during the day. Screen time and digital technology use can affect how quickly your child falls asleep and how long your child sleeps. This happens for several reasons:

- Screen time in the hour before bed can stimulate your child.
- Light from televisions, computer screens, phones and tablets might suppress melatonin levels and delay sleepiness.
- Your child might be tempted to stay up late to chat with family/friends or play games.

Here are ways you can reduce the negative effects of screen time on your child's sleep:

- Suggest quiet activities for your child to do in the hour before bedtime. This could be reading, listening to music or a podcast, doing a mindfulness activity and so on.
- If your child wants to use a device in the evening, encourage them to choose relaxing content and put the device away well before bedtime.
- Limit and monitor violent or stressful content at any time of day. This can affect sleep regardless of the time and length of use.
- Encourage your child to do outdoor physical activity or play during the day.
- Have a family rule that devices are left in a family room overnight.

Children aged 3-5 years need 10-13 hours of sleep a night. Some might also have a day nap of about an hour. Sometimes preschoolers can take a while to settle and get to sleep. This is because they're busy thinking about the day even after they go to bed.

A positive bedtime routine can help preschoolers feel ready for sleep, especially if you follow the routine consistently, both during the week and on weekends.

A bedtime routine for preschoolers might look something like this:

- 7:00 pm: brush teeth and go to toilet or put on night nappy if needed.
- 7:15 pm: quiet time – read a book, tell a story, sing a song and have a cuddle.
- 7:30 pm: get into bed and say goodnight.

Sleep is important for your preschooler's health, growth and development. When children get enough good-quality sleep, they're more settled and happier during the day. Getting enough sleep also strengthens your child's immune system and reduces the risk of infection and illness.

Source: [Raising Children Network](#)

Recipe of the Month

Carrot and Oat Mini Muffins

Ingredients

- 1 cup plus 1 heaped tablespoon (160g) wholemeal self-raising flour.
- 1 & 2/3 (150g) plain rolled oats
- 2 medium carrots, grated
- 2 ½ tablespoons (70g) honey or ¼ cup (65g) firmly packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 5 tablespoons (100ml) extra virgin olive oil

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees (160-degree fan-forced). Lightly oil a 24-hole mini muffin tin with olive oil spray or fill with mini cupcake cases.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, oats, grated carrot, honey or brown sugar, and cinnamon. Mix to combine.
3. In a separate bowl, lightly whisk eggs. Add oil and mix. Pour into carrot mixture and mix until just combined (don't overmix).
4. Spoon evenly into the muffin tin. Bake in the preheated oven for 12 -15 minutes, or until an inserted skewer comes out clean.
5. Allow to rest in the tin for 5 minutes before turning out and cooling on a wire rack.

