



A.B. Paterson College

Banjo and Friends

Early Childhood Centre
Newsletter

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Inside this issue

Welcome!	1
Kangaroos	2-3
Lorikeets	4-5
Wombats	6-7
Outside School Hours Care	8-9
Educational Leadership	10
What's on in Our Community	11
Support Networks	12
Recipe of the Month	13

Important Dates

- 8 June – Biggest Morning Tea
- 11 June – Pre-Prep Photography Day
- 19 June – Staff Professional Development Day (Service Closed)

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Welcome to our May Newsletter!

Environments in early childhood services play a crucial role in shaping how children learn, interact, and develop a sense of who they are. A well-designed environment supports children's emotional security and regulation, encourages curiosity, and invites meaningful play. When children feel safe and welcomed in their surroundings, they are more confident to explore, make choices, and build relationships with others.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0 highlights the environment as a key component of pedagogy, emphasising that children learn best in spaces that promote *Belonging, Being and Becoming*. It stresses the importance of environments that foster agency, allowing children to access materials independently and engage in play that reflects their interests, cultural identities, and development stages.

The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG) places strong emphasis on the importance of environments, with *Creating inclusive learning environments* as one of its core pedagogical practices. The QKLG explains that high-quality environments are those that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and supportive of children's identities, ensuring every child feels safe, valued, and able to contribute.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) outlines clear expectations for high-quality environments in Quality Area 3: Physical Environment, which requires services to provide safe, inclusive, and well-maintained spaces, resources, materials and equipment that support play-based learning and sustainable practices.

Together, the EYLF, QKLG and NQS position the environment as an active contributor to learning – a third teacher that shapes children's thinking, creativity, and social connections. When environments are intentional and responsive, they enrich every aspect of children's early learning experiences.

At Banjo and Friends, every part of our indoor and outdoor environments is intentionally designed to maximise children's opportunities for learning, exploration, and enjoyment, which is reflected in our tailored classroom programs, our collaborative outdoor program, and our thoughtful approach to selecting new materials and equipment.

Tegan Carroll
Banjo and Friends Centre Manager

Kangaroos Classroom

This month in the Kangaroos room, the children have been engaged in an exciting and educational learning journey exploring the wonderful topic of Space and the Solar System. The children's curiosity and enthusiasm have guided many meaningful conversations, creative experiences, and imaginative play opportunities throughout the month.

During group time, we introduced the children to the solar system and discussed the eight planets, their names, colours, sizes, and unique characteristics. The children were fascinated to learn about how planets orbit the Sun and how each planet is different from one another. We explored interesting facts about Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the Moon, while encouraging the children to ask questions, share ideas, and express their thoughts about space.

The children particularly enjoyed learning about astronauts, rockets, stars, galaxies, and space travel. Through stories, songs, videos, and discussions, they developed a growing understanding of space exploration and the world beyond our planet. These experiences encouraged the children's language development, listening skills, confidence in group discussions, and critical thinking.

To extend the children's learning and interests, we followed up our discussions with a variety of creative arts and crafts experiences. Each day, we introduced a different planet through hands-on art activities. The children created colourful planets such as Mars, Earth, and Saturn using paint, collage materials, glitter, paper plates, and recycled resources. They also enjoyed making Moon artwork and beautiful galaxy paintings using different textures and techniques. These art experiences supported children's creativity, fine motor development, hand-eye coordination, and self-expression. The children took great pride in their work and enjoyed sharing their creations with educators and friends.

Our learning environment was thoughtfully set up to encourage curiosity, exploration, and imaginative play. The provocation area included a space shuttle, astronaut figures, planets, and space-themed resources that invited the children to create their own space adventures. The children worked together to explore different scenarios, discuss their ideas, and engage in collaborative play.



Kangaroos Classroom

One of the highlights of the month was transforming our home corner into a space exploration area. The children were excited to dress up as astronauts using helmets and space costumes while pretending to travel through space in their spaceship. A control panel was added to encourage role play, communication, and problem-solving as the children imagined steering rockets, landing on planets, and going on rescue missions in space. Through this dramatic play experience, the children developed important social and emotional skills such as cooperation, turn-taking, teamwork, and confidence. It was wonderful to observe the children using their imagination to create stories and engage in meaningful interactions with their peers.

Throughout the month, the children also participated in space-themed sensory experiences, construction play, matching games, and early science discussions. They explored shapes, colours, counting, and positional language while building rockets and creating planets. These experiences supported early numeracy, cognitive development, and scientific thinking in a fun and engaging way.

As we move into the next month, we look forward to continuing to build on the children's interests through new learning experiences, creative projects, and hands-on exploration.

Napadeline Burke
Kangaroos Educator



Lorikeets Classroom

This month, our Service had an exciting and meaningful experience as we welcomed the Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Show, presented by Bravehearts. The Lorikeets children actively participated in this engaging and interactive program, which is designed to support young children in understanding personal safety in a fun, age-appropriate, and empowering way.

The show introduced the children to Ditto, a friendly mascot who guided them through important safety messages using storytelling, music, and role-play. The Lorikeets children were highly engaged and enthusiastic throughout the session, confidently joining in discussions, answering questions, and participating in activities. The interactive nature of the show helped them feel comfortable and supported while learning about important safety concepts.

One of the keys focuses of the program was helping children understand their feelings and body signals. The children learned that their body could give them clues when something doesn't feel right, often described as "uh-oh feelings." Through simple language and relatable examples, the Lorikeets children began to recognise that these feelings are important and should always be listened to.

Another important message from the show was understanding safe and unsafe situations. The children were encouraged to think about what makes them feel safe and who they can trust. The Lorikeets children participated in discussions about identifying "safe adults" in their lives; people they can go to if they feel worried, scared, or unsure. This helped build their confidence in seeking support when needed.

The program also introduced the idea of personal boundaries in a respectful and child-friendly way. The Lorikeets children learned that their body belongs to them and that it is okay to say "no" if something makes them feel uncomfortable. They practiced using strong, clear voices and were encouraged to speak up, even in situations where they might feel unsure.

Throughout the session, the Lorikeets children demonstrated great enthusiasm and curiosity. Many children were eager to share their thoughts and experiences, which created meaningful group discussions. This supported their understanding of personal safety also strengthened their communication and social skills.



Lorikeets Classroom

Following the visit, educators extended the learning through group discussions, role-play, and everyday interactions. The Lorikeets children were given opportunities to revisit key messages such as recognising feelings, identifying trusted adults, and practicing what to say in different situations. These extension experiences help reinforce learning in a familiar and supportive environment.

At our Service, we believe that teaching children about safety is an important part of supporting their overall wellbeing and development. Programs like the Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Show align with our commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and empowering learning environment for all children.

We encourage families to continue these conversations at home by talking about feelings, safety, and trusted adults. Open communication between children and adults plays a vital role in helping children feel secure and supported. Bravehearts has an array of resources to support children, families and educators. You can access their website by clicking [here](#).

Versha Dhingra
Lorikeets Educator



Wombats Classroom

This month, the Wombats classroom had the pleasure of celebrating Mother's Day with a special event dedicated to recognise and honour the important women in our children's lives. The celebration provided a valuable opportunity for mothers, grandmothers, carers, and special family members to spend quality time together within the learning environment while creating meaningful memories alongside the children.

To celebrate the occasion, the classroom was thoughtfully set up with a variety of engaging experiences for families to enjoy together. The children enthusiastically participated in the following activities alongside their mothers:

- Mother's Day Play Dough Table
- Mother's Day Sensory Tray with Letter Ice-Creams, Scoops and Rice
- Bracelet and Necklace Making
- Biscuit Decorating
- Mother's Day Colouring In and Card Making
- Mother's Day Books

Throughout the event, the classroom was filled with laughter, conversation, creativity, and joyful interactions as families explored the different experiences together. The children proudly shared their learning environment and engaged confidently in the activities, demonstrating excitement and enthusiasm while interacting with their loved ones. It was wonderful to observe the positive connections between families, children, and educators as everyone came together to celebrate such a special occasion.

Celebrations such as Mother's Day hold immense importance within early childhood education settings. These events help strengthen the partnerships between families and educators while fostering a strong sense of belonging and community within the classroom. Family involvement in classroom experiences allows children to feel supported, valued, and connected within their learning environment.

Hosting special events also supports children's social and emotional development. Opportunities to celebrate important people in their lives help children develop appreciation, empathy, and emotional connection. Through shared experiences, children are able to build confidence, strengthen relationships, and create lasting memories with their families and peers.



Wombats Classroom

Events like these also provide families with valuable insight into the children's daily learning experiences. Parents and carers are able to engage alongside their children in a relaxed and welcoming environment, helping to create stronger home and centre connections that positively support children's overall wellbeing and development.

The Wombats classroom Mother's Day celebration was a meaningful and memorable occasion for everyone involved. We extend our sincere appreciation to all the mothers and special family members who attended and contributed to making the event such a wonderful success. Your ongoing support and involvement within the classroom are valued and appreciated.

Otila Taunuu
Wombats Educator



Outside School Hours Care

It has been a busy and exciting start to Term 2 here at OSHC, with many fun and engaging experiences already taking place. The children have settled in beautifully and have embraced the wide range of opportunities provided each afternoon.

We are very pleased to welcome Miss Sapna back after her lovely long holiday. The children have been excited to reconnect with her, and it has been wonderful having her return to the service. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Miss Elissa and Miss Iryna, who have recently joined our OSHC team on a permanent parttime basis. We are looking forward to the valuable contributions they will bring to our program.

Throughout the first few weeks of the term, we have celebrated a number of meaningful and diverse events. The children participated in activities to acknowledge ANZAC Day, where they explored the importance of remembrance and respect. We also celebrated Japanese Children's Day, providing opportunities for children to learn about Japanese culture through creative and interactive experiences. In addition, preparations for Mother's Day were a highlight, with children enthusiastically creating thoughtful cards and crafts to share with their families.

Seasonal activities have also been a focus, with children enjoying a variety of autumn arts and crafts inspired by the changing colours and environment. Our STEM challenges have encouraged curiosity, problem solving and teamwork, with children engaging in hands-on learning experiences that promote creativity and critical thinking.

Physical activity and wellbeing have remained an important part of our program. The children have enjoyed participating in Just Dance sessions, which have been a fun and energetic way to stay active, as well as yoga sessions that promote relaxation, mindfulness and balance. Outdoor play continues to be a favourite, with regular visits to the Village Green where children can participate in group games and explore their surroundings.

We have also incorporated special environmental awareness days into our program, including World Bee Day and World Turtle Day, where Pingin the turtle helped guide discussions and activities about sustainability, conservation and caring for our environment.



Outside School Hours Care

These experiences have supported children in developing an understanding of their role in protecting the natural world.

We are also excited to have welcomed back our child-led Teacher of the Day program. This initiative allows children to take on leadership roles, share their ideas and interests, and contribute to planning activities. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow and their sense of belonging strengthen as they take ownership of their learning.

As we continue through the term, we look forward to providing many more engaging experiences that support creativity, wellbeing and social connection. Thank you for your ongoing support of our OSHC program.

Bec Rogers
OSHC Coordinator



Educational Leadership

This May, Banjo and Friends joined thousands of educators, families, and children across Australia to take part in National Simultaneous Storytime, a much-loved annual event that highlights the power of reading and storytelling in the early years.

At precisely the same time as other early learning services, schools, and libraries nationwide, our educators gathered children together to share this year's selected book 'Luna Roo, the Kangaroo Baller.' The excitement was palpable as children listened, laughed, and engaged with the story alongside their peers across the country. Events like this not only create a sense of connection and community but also reinforce a key message we value deeply, reading matters.

Building Strong Foundations Through Early Literacy

Early literacy is not simply about learning to read and write, it is about developing the foundational skills that support communication, comprehension, and lifelong learning. From infancy, children begin to build these skills through everyday interactions, including listening to stories, engaging in conversations, singing songs, and exploring books. Literacy is nurtured through engaging, play-based experiences. As children turn pages, predict what might happen next, retell stories, and connect characters to their own lives, they begin to make meaning in powerful ways. These moments support the development of critical thinking, imagination, and language skills, all essential foundations for future success in school and beyond.

The Power of Reading Together

Reading with children is one of the most impactful ways to support their development. Research consistently shows that children who are regularly read to develop stronger vocabulary, better comprehension, and a greater love of learning. Importantly, shared reading also strengthens relationships, creating opportunities for connection, conversation, and emotional bonding. During National Simultaneous Storytime, we saw firsthand how powerful this shared experience can be. Children were fully immersed in the story, asking questions, making predictions, dressing up and expressing their ideas. Educators extended the experience through discussion, creative arts, and dramatic play, allowing children to revisit and deepen their understanding.

Fostering a Lifelong Love of Books

Our goal is not just to teach children how to read, but to inspire a genuine love of books and storytelling. By providing access to diverse, high-quality literature and creating inviting literacy environments, we encourage children to explore stories independently and collaboratively. Events like National Simultaneous Storytime play a crucial role in promoting this love of reading. They remind us that literacy can be joyful, engaging, and shared, and that every child deserves the opportunity to experience the magic of stories.

Working in Partnership with Families

We recognise that families are children's first and most important teachers. We encourage families to continue the momentum of events like National Simultaneous Storytime at home by reading regularly with their children, visiting local libraries, and incorporating storytelling into daily routines. Simple moments, reading before bed, sharing a story at breakfast, or talking about pictures in a book, can have a lasting impact on a child's literacy journey.

Tegan Findlay
Educational Leader

What's On in Our Community

SeaFire



SeaFire returns to the stunning shores of Surfers Paradise Beach on Saturday 20 June 2026. Presented by City of Gold Coast, SeaFire is the Gold Coast's very own international fireworks competition and it's completely free and family friendly. Showcasing world-class pyrotechnics set against the iconic beachfront backdrop, this year's competition will see Team Canada go head-to-head with Team Poland, followed by a spectacular Aussie fireworks finale.

Fireworks times:

- 6pm – Team Canada
- 7pm – Team Poland
- 8pm – Australian finale

Pack a picnic rug, bring the family, and prepare for an unforgettable evening. SeaFire is set to ignite the Gold Coast once again!

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, 20 June from 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Where: Surfers Paradise Beach, The Esplanade, Surfers Parade, 4217

Contact: City of Gold Coast on 5581 7539 or events@goldcoast.qld.gov.au

How to Help Children Enjoy Sport

The Pre-Preps have been actively engaging in a variety of outdoor physical experiences. They have enjoyed playing with balls by bouncing, kicking and throwing, which supports their coordination and gross motor skills. The children have also shown great confidence when climbing through the obstacle course, using the ladders to reach the fort, riding bikes and balancing on stilts. These experiences encourage children to take safe risks, build strength, practise balance and develop confidence in their own physical abilities. We can see sport plays an important role in supporting children's learning. At this age, sport is not about competition or winning. Instead, it is about children building confidence, developing friendships and learning how to connect with others through movement and play.

Why sport is good for children

Playing organised sports can be good for children in many ways. For example, depending on age and interests, it can help children to:

- develop physical fitness, self-esteem and confidence
- improve movement and coordination skills
- learn to listen and follow instructions
- learn about teamwork, cooperation, leadership and other life skills
- learn about fair play and being a good sport person
- build resilience in childhood
- make friends

How to get your child into sport

Your child is likely to try a sport if it suits their interests, preferences and strengths. And playing with friends is often important for enjoyment. For example:

- Encourage your child to try different sports
- Build your child's skills
- Help your child manage emotions
- Consider club or team environments

What if your child isn't into sport?

Not all children are into sport. That's OK. If your child doesn't want to play sport, there are many other fun ways they can stay physically active. Examples include:

- walking or bushwalking with family and friends
- beach activities like snorkelling or bodyboarding
- youth groups – for example, Scouts or Guides
- land conservation and emergency service groups
- dancing, bike riding, skateboarding or scooting
- yoga, Pilates or tai chi
- gym sessions or other fitness classes

Source: [Raising Children Network](#)

Recipe of the Month

Pumpkin and Lentil Soup

Ingredients

- 5 tbsp (100ml) olive oil
- 1 medium leeks, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp garlic, crushed
- 1kg potatoes peeled, diced
- 2kg pumpkin, peeled, chopped
- 2 litres of salt reduced vegetable stock
- 3 x 410g can of lentils
- 1 litre of light evaporated milk
- 1 tbsp of Worcestershire sauce
- 20 slices of wholemeal bread



Method

1. Pour olive oil in a pan over medium heat, add leeks and garlic, sauté until soft.
2. Add potatoes and pumpkin, stirring well.
3. Add stock, bring to the boil and simmer partially covered, for 20-30 minutes (or until potatoes and pumpkin are soft).
4. Add lentils and cook for a few minutes. Remove from the stove and blend until a puree soup consistency.
5. Return pot to the stove, stirring well. Bring to boil, let simmer. Add evaporated milk and Worcestershire sauce,
6. stir to combine.
7. Additional water may be added if required.
8. Serve with a slice of wholemeal bread.