



Grade Prep Newsletter Term One 2021

IMPORTANT DATES

Important Dates Term One

Monday 8th March

Labor Day– No students at school-
Students commence full time school from Tuesday 9th March

Thursday 1st April

End of Term One–
Early finish 2.30pm

Monday 19th April

Term 2 commences.

* Get to know you interview dates TBA

What a great start!

We have had a fabulous start to our school year. All the children seem to be settling well into the school routines and enjoying their new experiences in Prep. As we mentioned at the information night, it is totally normal to expect the children to be exhausted and a bit cranky! They have had a huge day at school holding it all together, listening and following directions and then when they get to their safe sanctuary they let go! Sorry about that!

You have now received our Information Book via email. PLEASE READ IT. It has all the information about Prep and is really helpful in answering questions you have or just letting you know about things you may not have heard of. By now, you will have realised that email is our main source of communication, so checking it daily (if you can) really helps to keep you up-to-date with the goings on at school.

We understand information and new systems can sometimes be info overload (we all have kids) but it's important to set up your own system to make sure you don't miss out on information and key dates etc...

The Prep Picnic

Thank you to those that could come along to the Prep picnic last Wednesday night. It was heart-warming to see so many of you there introducing yourselves to others and connecting with your new friends! We hope it will be the first of many gatherings together! We are sorry we couldn't get around to everyone, we did try. In chatting to many of you it is evident that many of you have made the 'tree change' so are new to our community. We welcome you and hope you embrace life in the hills and the friendships that come along with being part of a school community. Most years we have a parent that starts a Facebook Page for their year level to make it easier to connect with other families. This is completely independent of the school BUT if you would like to send out a link to the page send it through to Alesha and she will send the link to all of the families so no one misses out.

What we are learning...

Numeracy

- * Number 1-10 and beyond, counting, number recognition and formation
- * Pattern- children are learning what a pattern is and how to make more complex patterns. This a very important skill as pattern transfers to number patterns eventually.
- * One-one correspondence. Ensuring when children count they are counting in a methodical way.

What is One to One Correspondence?

One-to-one correspondence is an early math concept that we, as adults, tend to take for granted. This developmental skill involves counting each object in a set once, and only once with one touch per object.

For example, a child who touches each toy car in a row and says the number name aloud for each car touched, "One, two, three, four..." is demonstrating the ability to count with one-to-one correspondence.

Why is One to One Correspondence Important?

One to one correspondence is important because it is a precursor for almost all mathematical concepts. Simply put, without well developed one-to-one correspondence skills, young children will struggle with basic math concepts.

How to Teach One to One Correspondence

Here are some simple ways you can help support the development of one-to-one correspondence skills in your classroom:

- Counting together with children
- Pointing to objects in a set as you say each number word aloud
- Moving each object in a set as you say each number word aloud
- Asking children questions such as, "How will you keep track of which ones you've counted and those you haven't counted?"



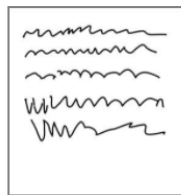
Writing

- * Writing their names using correct formation and remembering the names of the letters in their names.
- * Magic writing – children are ‘writing’ about their weekend or a response to a text. At this stage it may be squiggles on a line, initial sounds or words. Believing they ‘can’ is the most important thing.
- * Children need to tell the teacher the sentence they have ‘written’ and draw a picture that matches.
We have talked about full stops to end the sentence and capitals to start also.
- * Organisation- writing from left to write, having letters sit on the base line, using the correct page.
- * Pencil grip

What ever stage your child is at is fine, Prep is a time where we see growth in this area but each child develops differently and each stage is important and can not be missed or rushed. At the beginning of Prep writing there is SO much to consider, from holding a pencil, which page to write on, direction, writing on the base line etc... the mechanics and fine motor skills involved in writing takes our students some time to master. That’s what Prep is for! It is a wonderful journey to watch unfold, but please remember the journey is different for every child

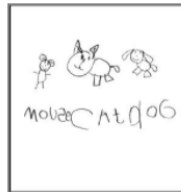
Stages of Emergent Writing

Emergent writers discover many ways to send written messages. The writing samples on this page demonstrate different kinds of writing evident in a kindergarten classroom. Each sample demonstrates one or more of the qualities of effective writing.



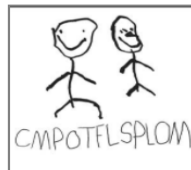
Drawing and Imitative Writing

The child writes a message with scribbling that imitates “grown-up” writing. It shows individuality and an attempt to communicate with others.



Copying Words

The child copies words from handy resources like books, posters, and word walls. The writing makes sense and shows knowledge of letter formation and the concept of words.



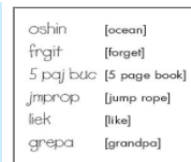
Drawing and Strings of Letters

The child writes with random letters to convey a message. The letters are formed well, but have no relationship to sounds. The writer is aware that print and art convey meaning.



Early Phonetic Writing

The child writes words using letters (mostly consonants) to represent words and sounds. The writing shows individuality, focuses on a topic, and makes sense.



Phonetic Writing

The child writes words using letters to represent each sound that is heard. The words make sense and may be used for writing longer texts.



Conventional/Some Phonetic Writing

The child focuses on a topic and uses close-to-correct copy. The writing demonstrates an emerging voice.

Please follow the link for a more detailed description of each stage of writing (you may need to cut and paste link in).

<https://k12.thoughtfulearning.com/teachersguide/writing-spot-assessment/stages-emergent-writing>

What we are learning...

THRASS

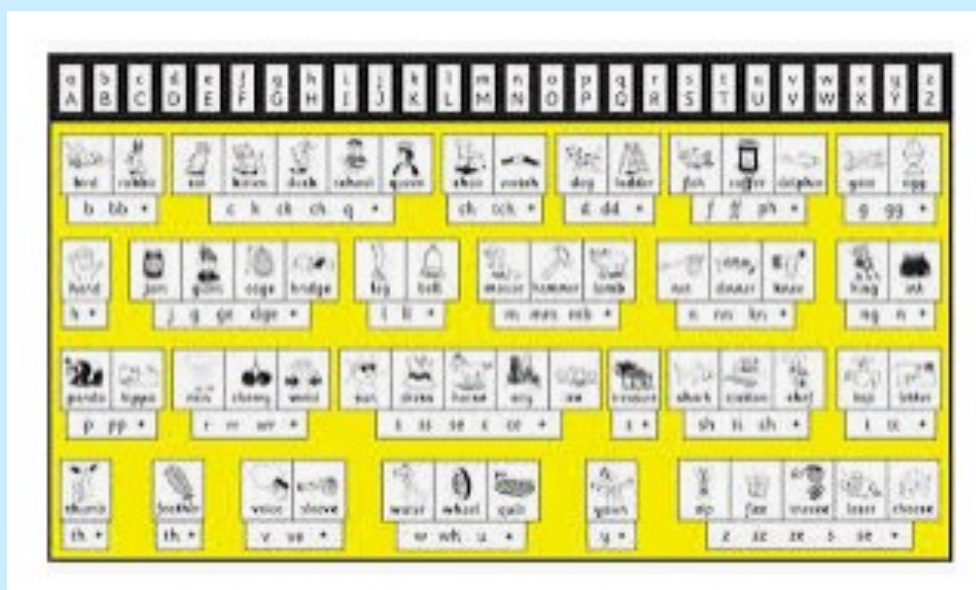
Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills

- * We are beginning to familiarize ourselves with the THRASS chart through games.
- * We are learning that each letter has a name and that it only makes a sound when it is in a word .
- * In the next few weeks we will be looking at the letters S A T P I N . We learn letter formation, the sound it makes, its name, words beginning with this letter, other sounds the letter can make etc..
- * We learn our letters through the THRASS chart, for example we say 's' as in sun or l as in tin (please read the parents info guide via the link below for more information).
- * We link a fine motor craft activity to each letter as well as kinesthetic experiences, such as playdough, painting, flour, bending pipe cleaners, sorting words etc..

It is really helpful to us if you can go over these letters with the children

Parent Guide to THRASS

<https://www.thrass.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/THRASS-Parents-Brochure-2020.pdf>



What we are learning...

READING

- * Children are exploring texts with their teacher and each other.
- In conjunction with THRASS we use a Synthetic Phonics approach to teach reading and writing. We also use cued articulation for visual cues to the speech sounds.

Synthetic Phonics

Research shows that to get every child reading and spelling we need to teach phonics with a systematic and explicit approach.



What Characterises a Synthetic Phonics Approach?

Synthetic phonics is a strange, technical name that has nothing to do with being artificial! The 'synthetic' name comes from the synthesising or blending of sounds to make a word and enable children to read. The teaching reading and spelling with synthetic phonics will have the following characteristics:

1) A simple to complex logic

The English language has 26 letters but 44 unique sounds, each with lots of different ways to spell them. A synthetic phonics approach will teach these 44 sounds from the simple to the more complicated logic.

First off, children are taught that each alphabet letter has its own unique sound. For example:



ant



bat



cat

Once children have this concept, the logic is made a little harder. Two (or sometimes three) letters can also come together to make a new sound. For example:



The next layer of complexity is where you really start to see spelling improve. Children learn that a sound can be represented in many ways. For example the /ee/ sound:



Finally, children will learn that a letter or group of letters can represent different sounds. For example:



2) Decoding is the first strategy to read and it should happen quickly

As soon as children have learned between 6-8 alphabet sounds, they must start blending to read *words*. Many programs will wait until children know all 26 alphabet sounds. This is completely unnecessary – it should be done much earlier. By doing it earlier, we demonstrate to children why we are learning the sounds; to blend words to read.

The process of reading involves decoding or 'breaking' words into separate sounds, which can then be blended together to read an unknown word. Children tackle each word with four steps:

1

cat

Can I read this word? No? Step 2.

2

cat
• • •

Identify the sounds.

3

cat
→

Blend the sounds together.

4

cat



Say the word and identify its meaning.

3) Spelling is taught alongside with reading

The process of spelling is the reverse to reading. It requires children to identify the sounds in a word and then to match a letter (or letters) with that sound to essentially 'make' the word. This takes a five step process:

1



Say the word.

2

cat
↔

Stretch the word.

3

cat
• • •

Count the sounds.

4

ca

Represent each sound with a letter.

5

cat ✓

Check the spelling looks right.

4) Children practise their skills with decodable texts

Let's assume that children have learned eight sounds:

s a t p i n m d

The texts children practise and apply their knowledge with, should *only* use the sounds the children have been taught. Many phonics books and apps make the mistake of giving words which, yes, are simple and use the target sound, but throw in sounds which the children simply have not learned yet. For example:

moon



mud



men



The /oo/ in 'moon', the /u/ in 'mud' and the /e/ in 'men' haven't been taught yet (remember the child has only learned: satpinmd, so far). It is therefore unfair to expect a child to read these words if they don't have the knowledge of all the sounds. In synthetic phonics, children only read words which use the sounds they have learned – they will be entirely decodable. Look at all the words they could read with only these 8 sounds:

sat in Pam pin din sip and
at mad it Tam nip pit man
pat pad tin nap tan sit a
tap sad pan dad pip an map

Cued Articulation

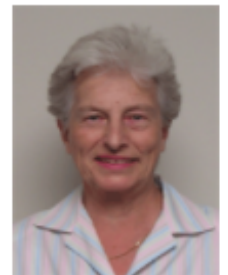
Cued Articulation

What is Cued Articulation?

It is a set of hand cues for teaching the individual sounds in a word. The hand movements are logical - each hand movement represents one sound and the cue gives clues as to how and where the sound is produced.

It is not a sign language where the whole word is signed - but Cued Articulation can be used alongside sign language. Cued Articulation should not be confused with 'Cued Speech'.

Colour Coding is also used for the written letters which represent these sounds.



Jane Passy OAM devised the cues while working with a group of children with severe speech and language problems. These children had problems in auditory recall and needed a visual aid to learning. Teachers found that not only did using the cues help the children with difficulties, but it raised the sound awareness skills of everyone in the class. Jane developed the system to include 26 consonants and 23 vowel sounds.

For an example of this follow the link to see what the cued articulation is for the Letter Ss we have learnt so far.

<https://youtu.be/3QUvo-yLETo>



Berry Street Educational Model

Children are involved in brain breaks in their learning and are being taught that the best learning happens when they are present, grounded and centred. A big part of learning is developing persistence and resilience to have a go and try again if they don't get it the first time. This is often difficult for young children but an essential skill in learning and life. In the coming weeks we will establish a Prep Resilience Plan with the children, this will be some 5 minute strategies they can implement if they need to have a mini break to stay on task. This might be getting a drink, jumping on the mini tramp etc.. alongside this children will be introduced to the Behaviour Management procedure. You can find a copy of this in your information books.

P.E/Health/Respectful Relationships

In Respectful Relationships in Term 1, we will be looking at Emotional Literacy and Personal Strengths. Emotional literacy skills will be built through activities that encourage the children to recognise and identify emotions in themselves and others through facial expressions and body language. The personal strengths topic will encourage children to recognise strengths in themselves and others (such as being brave or kind) and consider how these strengths are helpful at home and school.

This term's PE/Health focus is Athletics. We will be learning fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping and throwing. The children will be learning these skills through games and activities that also help them learn personal and social skills such as how to follow rules and share equipment. We will be re-visiting these skills in Term 4 when the children will participate in a junior athletics day. Please note PE will begin on a Wednesday when the children begin full time-weeks.

Music with Leanne

This term Music classes focus on learning to participate as a class member – sharing music making with others, starting and stopping together, listening and following directions. This all takes place through lots of music games, creative movement activities, songs and through playing a variety of percussion instruments. Preps practice creating and echoing four beat rhythmic phrases and explore vocal qualities – speaking, shouting, whispering and singing.

Here is a song we've been singing with the egg shakers –

Shake up high, Shake down low,

Give a little shake and around we go

Shake up high, Shake down low

Give a little shake now hold it so.....

At the end of the song students find an interesting way to hold the egg shakers. Lots of laughs as they find ways to balance the eggs on heads, feet, elbows etc



Art with Sophia

Hello Prep families,

It has been wonderful getting to know all of your precious children during Art sessions over the past few weeks in the Art room. The Preps have been having lots of fun exploring, experimenting, and making different marks using mediums such as oil pastels and chalk pastels.

Not everyone draws an outline successfully to begin with and at this stage is not the prime objective. Mark making upon a page allows children to feel successful without restriction, it gives an alternative pathway to feel good about themselves and their work. Success leads to further interest in drawing.

The Preps have been building a visual and verbal chart of mark making to record how many different ways mediums can be used. - How many different effects we can get. How many different actions we can use and so on.

The Preps have all completed beautiful Self Portraits and already proved to be such creative artists. Their portraits are on display in the main building around the round window. If you get a chance please take the time to appreciate their efforts.

Art Appreciation is an integral part of all of our sessions. Appreciation of not only their own but of their peers and of accomplished artists as well. The focus for this term and others this year is to develop their self-expression and to nourish and encourage their view of themselves as 'Art' makers.



STEM with Nina

This term we are starting off by introducing the Preps to what STEM is and familiarising them with locations such as the STEM room and the garden. Later this term we will be investigating weather and how it effects our lives and clothing choices.



A huge favour...Can you make a batch of Playdough???

We use playdough daily in Prep, we use it for fine motor activities such as letter formation, number formation, counting...as well as just for fun!!! Usually we would make our grade shared playdough BUT in our current COVID climate we were wondering if everyone could make their child an individual batch and pop it into a disposable container (just so we don't lose any tupperware)! If you have time or can manage a second batch it would be wonderful to have a few spare for those families that may just need a hand at the moment keeping up - we have all been there! If we could aim to have one for everyone after the long-weekend that would be brilliant!



Just check that your child has a NAMED drink bottle, blue folder, art smock, library bag and hat. Any jumpers found in the yard or unnamed in the classroom end up at our lost property cupboard near the student toilets. If you are missing something that is where you can look for it! Most things come back to youeventually!

ABSENCE NOTICES /Being on time

We ask that you use Compass to notify the school when your child is absent. Any extended absences for anything other than illness must be approved by Deb

Thank-YOU for being on time, we very much appreciate you having your children ready to come into the class at 8.55am. It makes our job so much easier settling the children and getting the day under way.

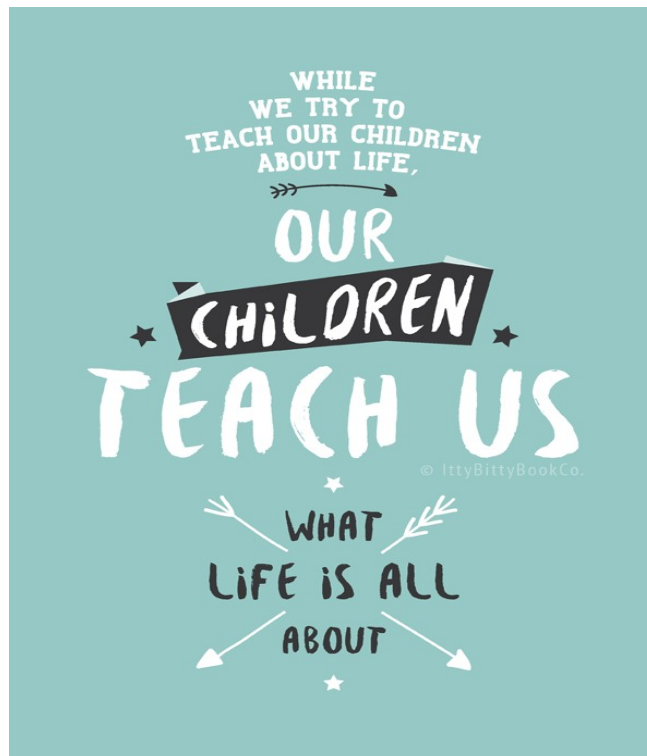
Readers and Library Book

Just to clarify, Prep A and C have library on a Monday and Prep B on a Tuesday, children need to return their library book IN THEIR LIBRARY BAG (not blue folder) and then they can choose another book. Children cannot borrow another book until their book is returned but it's no big deal they can still browse and enjoy the library!

Each Monday (Prep A and C) and Tuesday (Prep B) children will change their 5 readers. Please fill in the diary to show they have read something during the week. We check diaries on a that day too. Having said that please don't feel pressure at this stage if they are too tired. If they finish their readers they can read them again, work on their golden words, or the alphabet and practice writing their name.

Writing Names

Can your child write their name correctly? If not it would be a great thing to practise. We use Sassoon font NOT Victorian cursive (we sent home a name tag in their info packs last year).



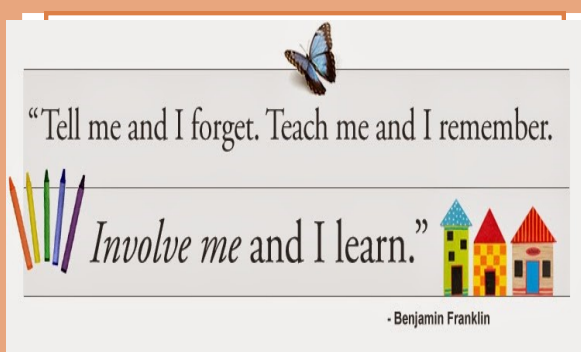
OSHC

If your child attends before and after school care please send your teacher an email letting them know the days this is happening so we can make sure we keep an eye on where kids need to be.

Do you have a health care card?

If you have a health care card please see our office to apply for CSEF it is \$125 that can be used for Camps, Sports and Excursions. You are also eligible for State Schools Relief assistance that provides uniforms in Prep and again in Year 7. Please see Karen, Kim or Andrea at the office.

Please note, if you have selected 'do not publish photo to media' on your child's enrolment form we will not use their images in our newsletters as our newsletters go on our website. If you are unsure, you can check with Kim or Andrea at the office.



Reading Eggs & Mathletics passwords

This week you will find your child's Mathletics and Reading Eggs Passwords stuck in the front cover of their diary. Please explore these sites with your child, they are a FABULOUS way to help with reading and maths. You can load them on their ipad (if they have one) or they can use a PC. We understand some of you won't allow your child to use technology yet, and that is also fine. We provide each child from Prep-2 a subscription to these sites. The kids love them and it certainly helps with their learning.

If you have any issues/concerns or just want to meet with any of us for a chat about your child, please feel free to contact us via email.

We are always happy to make a time to meet with you.

Kind Regards,

The Prep Team

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We have been busy in Prep!



