



# REDDAM EARLY LEARNING SCHOOL WOOLLAHRA NEWSLETTER

## Dee's Message

7 FEBRUARY 2020

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We have all had another positive and happy week in the ELS. The children already seem more settled and a contented hum seemed to fill the classrooms and corridors. The children were at their creative best, producing some beautiful works of art, while expressing their own individual experiences of life.

In last week's newsletter I referred to the Reggio Emilia approach to education, and the benefits of offering opportunities for self-discovery and learning. Of course, because the children are still so young, the teachers play a critical role in prompting, guiding and encouraging them along the way – but doing so in a way that promotes rather than quashes individuality.

Much of what the children engage in each day is problem-solving. From the simplest choices and decisions, to more complex evaluation of how to resolve a problem, this skill is a critical one for all children to master. Several articles and commentators in Australia have in recent months added to the conversation about how important this

skill is for children, especially as they progress through school.

One piece of research points to the necessity of what the researchers term "load reduction instruction". They suggest that a balance needs to be found between explicit instruction and guided enquiry – and that there are five principles which should be followed.

Firstly, tasks should be age-appropriate and simple enough for the children to understand and do. Secondly, the teacher should offer support throughout the process, perhaps assisting by breaking the task into steps. Practise and repetition then helps to reinforce what the child has learned, along with both feed-back and feed-forward. Finally, the teacher can provide a more complex task, with minimal support.



# Dee's Message

This final step is where real problem-solving takes place and where the child is required to put into practice what he or she has learned previously but perhaps in a different context. Even with very young children, this is a powerful reinforcer of problem-solving and provides wonderful opportunities for praise and encouragement.

It is very special to see how the children in the ELS move from a reliance on explicit instruction to greater independence, when

they are given only guided instruction. Even in these early steps of problem-solving, they are laying the foundations for more complex decisions which they will have to make as they get older.

Have a happy weekend!

Dee Pitcairn  
Principal



# The Nest (1R)

Kiri Winders, Rachael Soegiono, Min Pattharasiritanarat & Rochelle Lundie

Our children enjoyed another great week exploring their new surroundings in the Nest. We noticed that they are becoming more and more comfortable with their new teachers, showing their growing confidence and trust as we share giggles and many cuddles throughout the day. The educators in the Nest aim to create a safe and welcoming environment, so the little ones can feel safe, and free to explore and play.

As we settle into our routine, we have engaged in sensory activities such as play dough, drawing and painting. We have also been introduced to our specialist classes including Playball with teacher Rama, Dance and Drama with teacher Laura and Music time with teacher Nick.





# Fledglings (1E)

By Jane Teh, Shirley Brockwell, Anna Lee and Natalia Jimenez

These warm weeks of summer see the children becoming more secure in their new Fledglings "family" as they are welcomed each morning and the daily routine become familiar and comforting. Developing secure attachments to teachers and the group builds a confident base from which to explore interests and a sense of belonging within the class and school community. It is a joy getting to know each child and to see them happy and engaged as they settle into chosen activities.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) Outcome 2 sees children connected with and contributing to their world and responding to diversity with interest and respect. We enjoy the many cultures of our community and welcome the opportunities to learn about and share in festivities, customs and traditions.

So it is that this week we celebrated Chinese New Year together with many wonderful activities!

The children created and decorated beautiful red Chinese fans, practising their fine motor skills and dexterity through manipulating chopsticks to pick up noodles from little bowls at our Chinese feast in the play kitchen, sing Chinese New Year songs and join in a lion dance. We made beautiful fans using large brushes to sweep the red paint across paper plates. The children especially enjoyed this fan painting activity, each little artist immersed patiently in the delightful discovery of their own creative talents. In the specially decorated play kitchen the children curiously explored the use of the chopsticks to pick up soft noodles of yellow wool from little red Chinese noodle bowls. Other "food" was found hidden in the bamboo steamer and this added to the fun as the children enjoyed the accomplishment of developing mastery over the chopsticks. We listened to the special "I like Chinese New Year" song and the lion dance experience saw the teachers and children dance together as we passed the Chinese lion to all of our friends.

A special cooking activity with the group taught the children to make dumplings, using

tongs to collect the fillings of carrots, chives, mushrooms and tofu which was placed in the wrappers and shaped in the palms of little hands.

The last day of the two week Chinese New Year festival is known as Chap Goh Mei and is also Chinese Valentine's Day! This Spring Lantern festival also sees decorative red lanterns lit, often in the shape of animals, and our children each hung their own red paper lanterns on branches of the cherry blossom tree which we made together by scrunching red tissue paper into little balls for the blossoms and gluing them carefully to the branch.

This week welcomed a few new classmates and we are delighted at how quickly our group is learning and enjoying the new routines. Many friends sing and clap to the favourite songs or observe with interest and enjoyment. (Some of our most popular songs are "Row, row your boat", "Wheels on the Bus", "Baa baa black sheep", "Humpty Dumpty" and especially "The muffin man"). The children sit in a circle for our morning group time and the "Tick Tock" song gives us a chance to remember everyone's names as each child and teacher is welcomed in turn. Great listening skills are shown as the children follow instructions when they hear their name to go and wash hands with the help of the teacher before settling to the fun of a shared morning tea at tables with friends.

Our specialist classes are all underway again this week and Coach Rama's Playball session captivated the interest of the children as they learnt new songs and instructions to follow actions, after which they discovered how to roll the large coloured balls they were each given. So much Playball fun is yet to unfold!! Our specialist Music teacher, Nick, also invited interest and participation as children tapped percussion instruments in rhythm with the sounds of the keyboard and favourite songs. Coach Laura brought the magic of Dance and Drama to our classroom and we were invited to join in the imaginative experiences together.

# Fledglings (1E)

## Photo Gallery





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## Photo Gallery





# Fledglings (1E)

## Photo Gallery



# Stage 2

By Daniella Gosty, Karla Cabezas, Shauna Corry, Sarah Noone, Priscilla Corazza and Lois Ma

## Developing a sense of belonging

Over the past few weeks the children have become more familiar with the Stage 2 routines and we are so proud of how well they have adapted to their new and bigger classroom.

Term One is often the most difficult part of the year for both parents and children as there are some tears along with the goodbyes in the mornings. However, the children who have joined our class have been welcomed by the existing children who were eager to assist them through the settling in period. Even at a very young age, you can see the children beginning to form connections with their peers and teachers. From the Monday to Wednesday group Adam was observed giving William H. a cuddle after welcoming him back from holidays, we also observed Lily assisting William D to look for his hat. In the Thursday to Friday group, Sofia held Arthur's hand (a new friend) and walked with him to the toilet at transition time.

## Establishing new routines.

In the mornings from 8am to 9am the children are greeted and settled in through the various activities on offer in the Stage 2 classroom. The "Tick Tock" at 9am then lets us know that it is time to assist in the packing away of the room and to gather as a whole group on the mat for the start of our day ahead. Our day begins with the "Good morning" song from the "Jamie's Jam on toast CD" where children are encouraged to greet their teachers and each other. After this special greeting, the children then move into their core groups along with their teachers. The children are continuously becoming more familiar with the names of their core group which are called either Kookaburras or Tree Frogs as they develop their sense of belonging.

Since the beginning of the year, the children in both groups have been focusing on learning the names of their teachers and friends using the Bee puppet and the song "Bee, Bee Bumblebee, can you sing your name to me?" and continued to do so once our new friends joined each group.

**EYLF Outcome 2.1: Develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and when they participate in routines.**

## Exploring with Art

The Tree Frogs have now completed working on their placemats using thin brushes with water colours. Each child was invited to create their own masterpiece using their own choice of colour. These will be used at mealtimes so that the children can find their own place at the table.

## Friendly introduction

You may have noticed that Stage 2 consists of many teachers and it may sometimes be a little busy morning so please feel free to introduce yourselves to us if we haven't already done so.

The Kookaburra teachers are Daniella, Shauna and Robbie and the Tree Frog teachers are Karla, Sarah and Joyce.

**Learning Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity

1.1 Children feel safe, secure, and supported.

1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

1.3 Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.

1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

**Learning Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

3.1 Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.



## Stage 2

### Photo Gallery



# Stage 3

By Christina Mandalidis, Susan Casey, Jason Corrigan, Polina Rodov, Yuliya Ginis and Tiina Juvakka.

## Helping children and their families belong

'In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to develop a sense of belonging' (EYLF, p. 7).

Starting school can be an emotional experience. Children especially can often experience some difficulty settling into a new environment, particularly if they find it hard to separate from family or familiar caregivers.

Saying goodbye to our families in the morning, meeting the new teachers and the children, being in a different environment, adjusting to the unfamiliar routine can all be challenging for both children and their families alike. In Stage 3, we aim to settle the children and families into their new environment as smoothly as possible.

Tips for families on saying goodbye to children may be found on this website: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/preschool/starting-preschool>

During group time, we read a reassuring and positive book called the 'First day of school' by Toby Forward. "The first day of school is full of new experiences. And while it's school time, mum is also busy doing all sorts of things at work or (at home). When it's time to go home, guess who can't wait to have a hug and ask, "What have you been doing today?"

In Yuliya's class, a visual learning routine and room limits (with pictures showing the different steps in the class routine) will be displayed and used throughout the day to help children learn about their new environment. This will also be shared with the children, educators and families. Routines can help our children feel safe and secure, particularly when new things are happening.

## Developing a sense of belonging

"Participating in cultural and artistic experiences are necessary for building children's understanding, not only of their own culture but other cultures, as it provides opportunities to broaden their horizons and learn from other cultural and artistic traditions. Thus contributing towards mutual understanding and appreciation of diversity." - UN Committee on the rights of the child.

To celebrate Australia Day and the Lunar New Year, we read some wonderful books to the children during group times including:

'I am Australian too' by Mem Fox. This book shares some of the many and varied stories of Australia and the places that Australians, their parents and their grandparents have come from. It is a celebration of multiculturalism and an exploration of the cultural diversity that is modern Australia.

Another book we read is called 'Lanterns and Firecrackers, a Chinese New Year Story' by Janny Zucker and Jan Barger. This was followed by the children meeting the dragon puppet and following its lead with some groovy dance moves.

In the spirit of Australia Day, families were invited to share some information about the children's adventures around our wonderful country, Australia. A family adventure story or a photo of the child visiting an Australian location was then shared with the group for further learning. For example, Lucy shared photos and spoke about her family flying on the big airplane to Perth, seeing a mummy kangaroo with a baby Joey in her pouch and collecting shells to decorate a sandcastle. Dylan shared his story about his trip to the Gold Coast, where he watched the Tiger Show at Dreamworld and the Dolphin Show at SeaWorld. Sienna shared her story about having fun in Tasmania.



# Stage 3

By Christina Mandalidis, Susan Casey, Jason Corrigan, Polina Rodov, Yuliya Ginis and Tiina Juvakka.

In our mini atelier, the children had the opportunity to draw and paint with watercolour paints. Some iconic Australian images were displayed for the children to observe and ask questions about. The children had the choice of tracing wooden shape blocks to represent the Opera House or the Harbour Bridge.

The children were also engaged in another art experience called 'The Shades of Red', a textured painting. A variety of materials was presented on the art table for the children to explore, experiment and create with, such as red and white paint, glue and

rice. The children curiously painted with a mixture of glue and paint, then sprinkled rice all over their creations. This dried into a very glossy finish! The children's masterpieces are displayed on the wall in our classroom for everyone to admire.

We are lucky to have a wonderfully diverse group of children and families this year.

Celebrating culturally alongside our children and families is deeply embedded within our school's philosophy. Children benefit from exposure to the multitude of cultures.





Stage 3  
Photo Gallery





# Stage 3

## Photo Gallery



# Stage 4

By Cassandra Holmes, Jane Pledger, Sandra Carberry, Nina Bergel and Kristina Rocchi

## A sense of identity

Over the past few weeks the children have been asked, "What is your name?" numerous times by teachers and peers as we all get to know each other. We have played name games to familiarise ourselves with each other's names and the children are encouraged to ask a peer what their name is if they are not sure or have forgotten. At this age, children are very proud of saying, hearing, writing and reading their name. Therefore, this is a good starting point for literacy in the classroom – something that each child is proud of and will enjoy learning about.

Children are interested in their names because it represents who they are. Their name is an important part of their identity and children are proud of that. Children's names are the first words they understand and can identify with. In this way, they connect print with something very meaningful. This leads to an interest in trying to 'copy' their name by making marks on paper at first, followed by writing in a more conventional way.

In Sandra and Jane's class we have been focusing on name recognition, letter recognition and letter formation in each child's own name. This begins each morning with the children identifying their name on their locker. Following this, the children are invited to the sign in table where they identify and trace the letters to form their name. This week the children also engaged in a one to one learning experience with their teacher where they explored, with guidance, the correct formation of each letter in their name.

A spontaneous learning experience occurred in the classroom this week when a group of four children organised the magnetic tracing letters in alphabetic order. The children were resourceful in their learning by using an alphabet puzzle box picture, along with singing the alphabet to prompt what letter comes next. Other children in the classroom expressed interest by approaching this activity to have a look, or help in finding a letter. This was used as a teachable moment to extend on this interest. The children were invited to come to the area where the alphabet was now complete. They identified the letters in their name and used the magnetic boards to practise the correct formation.

To be able to write, children need to do many things at once. They need to want to write, they need to hold a pencil and have enough fine motor control to make the pencil do what they want it to do. They also need to know what the letters look like and be able to reproduce them. There are many opportunities for the children to do this on a daily basis in their learning environments as the materials, resources and encouragement are offered.

Have a lovely weekend.



Stage 4  
Photo Gallery





## Stage 4

### Photo Gallery





# Dance and Drama

By Laura Hudson

During the first couple of weeks in Drama we will be establishing what drama is and for the children to have an understanding of what they do in drama.

In the Nest – Stage 2 we started with the parachute as we do every week singing our Hello Song. We flew like aeroplanes and landed on a “rainbow”. The children were then asked what colour they were sitting on and what was something of that colour. We then did some shaking - fast and slow, starting and stopping, up and down, and we always finish with going under (which they love!). Lily and Austin from Stage 2 always look forward to going under the parachute! This week we explored “What is drama?” To help us this week we had a visit from Ballet Bear in Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Stage 4 explored these concepts without Ballet Bear to help them. Actors need to be good at copying. We copy different people so we can become that character. Ballet Bear loves to play “Ballet Bear says”. We play games like “Ballet Bear says” in Drama to encourage spatial and body awareness. To play, Ballet Bear called out things like “touch your nose”, “clap your hands”, and “tickle your toes”, and the children were encouraged to copy.

For Stage 2 and up, if Ballet Bear didn't say “Ballet Bear says...” the children were told not to copy! This caused a lot of giggling - especially in Stage 3. Ballet Bear then wanted to see if we could be different characters. Actors have to be good at pretending. The children became astronauts walking on the moon, superheroes (flying through the woods - suggested by Jack, Stage 3), elephants, and giraffes. We added in, for Stage 3, a “freeze” component, where the children stopped when Ballet Bear stopped!

We then explored our emotions. Actors need to be able to show their emotions. We

discussed where we show emotions: on our faces. The children showed me (and Ballet Bear) angry, sad, confused, bored, shocked, excited, and happy. Charlotte from Stage 4 has a very convincing angry face! We then explored space. Actors need to have good spatial awareness.

The children spread into their own space, and then pantomimed being stuck in a box following on from last week's lesson. Stage 2 and 3 started in a very small box, that eventually grew into a big one. Stage 4 started big and became small. Stage 4 were encouraged to use their faces to express how they felt about the box shrinking, and how they would break out when the box was at its smallest. Were they scared to be stuck? Sore? Angry? After breaking out of our box, I called out various pairings for Stage 4 like “touch the floor with only 1 hand and 1 foot”, “put 4 little fingers together”, or “put 2 ears together” to further our work with spatial awareness. We then played “Pass the ball” in Stages 2 and 3, and “What's the goo for you?” in Stage 4. These are two variations of the same game to encourage imaginative play and spatial awareness.

In Stage 2 and 3, an imaginary ball was passed around the circle. The children were encouraged to throw the ball in the air and catch it and bounce it on the floor. We then passed an imaginary kitten around the circle. We discussed: how would we hold the kitten? Would we be gentle or rough? In Stage 4, I started with some imaginary magical goo that could be changed into anything! The goo was passed around the circle, and the children were asked “What's the goo for you?” Some cool suggestions were a butterfly, a crown, a witch, a banana, some watermelon, and Elsa.

What a fabulous week of drama. Well done, everyone

# Music

By Nick Summerfield

We have a special connection to music - it speaks to us before we can speak ourselves. Watching how these young minds connect with music is really special.

This term's focus will be developing a sense of beat. Beat and Rhythm are developed by doing - they are kinesis. In addition to developing a sense of timing, our exercises will help develop coordination, memory and pitch.

In Stage 3 and 4, we began the class with our Expression Circle. This week I wanted the children to tell me something that makes them happy - we had lollies, the sun, swimming and cuddles from mum and dad as some of the answers.

After our circle we lined up around the piano and sang through our 'Good Morning Song', followed by 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'. The familiarity makes it easier for shy children, but it also creates the feeling of 'BA' which is what we sing our scales over. We do our simple 5 note scales at various tempos but ending in unison - trying to teach active listening between each other when singing in a group.

Following the steady beat of the drum, the children had to clap in time. Having them focus on the drum, while watching the stick, can help fall into time. We layered this with stomping and maracas which the kids really enjoyed seeing how fast they could go. Stage 4 we were encouraged to all clap and see if they could find a unified beat.

And we began learning our song for the term - 'Here Comes The Sun' before ending the lesson with our 'Goodbye Song'.

In Stage 2 we started introducing and learning the words to our 'Good Morning Song'. We sang through some familiar songs like 'ABC', 'Do-Re-Mi' while using instruments to free play along and find a beat.

Revisiting our 'Sunflower Song', the children really enjoyed being little seedlings buried in the Earth, waiting for our farmer to come and water them. As we sing through, the children are encouraged to grow and expand their bodies while playing maracas or wood sticks to represent growing flowers. The tree frogs especially enjoyed the mist from a spray bottle Farmer Sarah used to water them.

We used simple body percussion patterns which we slowly layered to keep in time with a simple drumbeat. We marched around the room at different tempos with different percussive movements to help encourage movement and coordination while freezing in unison.

In Stage 1 and The Nest, the children are settling and becoming more familiar with my face. We sang through some regular songs to ease them into the new routine of weekly music before trying to encourage the children in free play with some instruments. In Stage One we got our brains moving by marching around the room to 'The Ants Go Marching' while playing our maracas - to the sky, to the floor, fast and slow. We then used our ribbon bells on our wrists to clap and make them ring.





# SPORT

By John Quilter

Sport began in Stages 3 and 4 this week! Classes were upbeat and fun and all activities were kept reasonably simple, for now!

For those who do not know me, my name is John Quilter, and I have been working in the sports world for over 20 years, mainly with basketball. I have been here at Reddam for two years now and love delivering sports classes to our little "friends" in the ELS.

With a focus on enjoyment and individual growth, my classes incorporate gross fundamental body movements with the basic skills that students will learn in

kindergarten. Many of the activities also incorporate cognitive skills and our classes support the children's preparation for kindergarten.

For most of the first term, the games that we play are designed to be very accessible for all children so as to establish a positive, fun and enjoyable environment that then provides us with the foundation for learning throughout the year.



# Happy Birthday



**Reddam Early Learning**

would like to wish a very happy birthday to

**Max Henwood**

who celebrate their special day this week  
and over the weekend.

**We hope you have a fabulous day!**

