



MILLICENT NORTH KINDERGARTEN

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# Welcome to a new year

Week 3 Term 1 2022

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Families,

It's been a lovely start to the year so far and after a short week 1, we had some very keen children ready to get back to normal kindy sessions.

It has been wonderful to welcome back last year's pre-entry children as full-time preschoolers. They are confidently carrying out the routines for storing their drink bottles, lunch boxes, fruit snack and signing-in. We appreciate the support you give your child as he/she carries out the tasks - the children are gaining independence very quickly as they get used to it all.

It has been great to see the children getting to know each other as they play inside and outside. We are encouraging the children to introduce themselves to the people they don't know as they play together, and will be using songs and games to help them learn each other's names as part of our group time activities.

We look forward to an enjoyable learning time together at Millicent North Kindergarten in 2022.

An outdoor overhead blind was installed by Millicent Windows and Doors during the holidays to shade a popular play area that gets very hot in the afternoon. The children have appreciated the shade during the hot days we have had so far this term and it has made that play area a lot more inviting.



## What is happening this term...

We have a few events happening during Term 1 and we would appreciate the support of our families during these times.

The Governing Council AGM will be held on **Monday 28th February (week 5)** at 7pm. It would be great to see families attend the AGM and it will be even better to have a strong representation from families on this year's Governing Council. It is a good way to find out more about the 'workings' of a kindergarten, as well as having a say in your child's preschool matters, getting to know the staff and meeting other families. Governing Council is instrumental in helping to organise fundraisers and events for the kindergarten. We hold 2 meetings per term and it is often as social as it is serious. Invitations are attached to this newsletter and we hope to see you there.

Later in the term we will be holding a **Twilight kindergarten session**. This will be held on **Monday 28th March** from **5:30pm-7pm** and is a great way to have a look around and see what your child experiences when they attend kindergarten, as well as an opportunity to meet other families.

We give you the opportunity to play with your child for an hour or so, get to know the staff a bit better and enjoy a light meal with us before heading home. You will see that date on our term calendar which is attached to this newsletter.

# Introducing our Millicent North Kindergarten staff team

We are very fortunate to have a staff team who have been working together over the past few years.

This brings a consistency to our kindergarten with all staff having a common understanding and shared vision for our site.



Donna Barber - Director



Tracy Pratt - Teacher

Jo Bowering - ECW and Occasional Care



Roanna Vincent - ECW



Lisa Moon - ECW



## Our Term 1 big learning idea Identity

While much of the learning at preschool is child-initiated and play based, staff plan many experiences to build upon the knowledge that children bring with them when they start kindergarten.

The framework for our curriculum is called 'Belonging, Being and Becoming'. It contains outcomes that we use when observing and writing Learning Stories about your child, as well as our summative reports when your child finishes their year at kindergarten. Our aim is to provide opportunities for children to follow their interests and build upon what they already know. We watch what the children are engaged in, talking to us about, questioning, etc., and use this information as part of our planning.

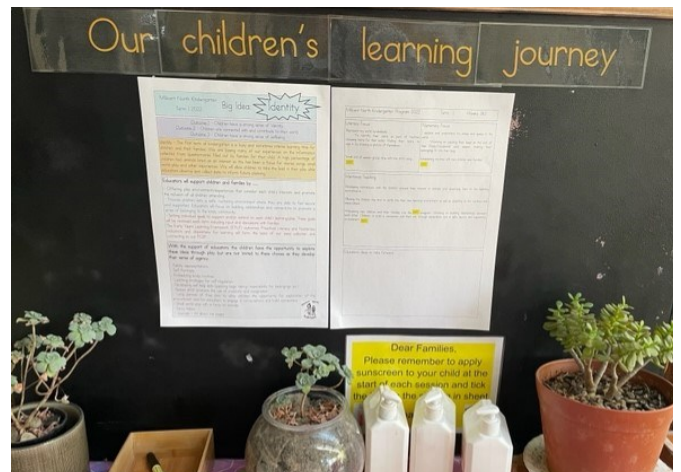
As you would have noticed, creative areas such as playdough, painting, cutting, gluing, box construction, jigsaws, blocks and drawing are always available for children to access. The special interest tables/spaces are designed for children to explore and develop important fine and gross motor skills that they will need as they grow. Some areas are left free so that children can make choices about what they would like to do there.

We chose the concept of IDENTITY as our big idea because we feel that the first term at full time kindy is when your child is finding and exploring their sense of identity as part of a new group in a new setting. We used the information collected from the questionnaires each family filled out about their child to plan and set up the learning experiences. While the children are engaging in activities that they already enjoy and have a sense of connection to, their social network begins to expand and we see their confidence to explore new experiences building.

A copy of our Big Idea was placed in your child's pocket and is on display with our planning page. This is for you to look at and we welcome your questions and input into the learning experiences your child is a part of.

Our program and planning on display in the verandah area.

We value our families input and feedback so please let us know if there is anything you would like to know more about your child's learning experiences at kindergarten.



## Boandik learning

A big part of our kindergarten program every year is learning about our local indigenous culture. At group time, we greet our children every morning with the phrase "Martu Karakat Wingarra", which means "Good Morning Friends".



Aunty Michelle

Every year we take part in cultural sessions with local Elders Doug Nicholls and Aunty Michelle, which give our children a deeper engagement with the Boandik land that our kindergarten is built upon.

In week 10, we will welcome Aunty Michelle to our kindy.

Aunty Michelle has recorded a number of short videos, so in preparation for her visit later in the term, we will begin watching them this week. Through these videos, we will learn more Boandik words and phrases, and the children will get to know a bit about Aunty Michelle.

Aunty Michelle has written a book titled "Annie's Story", which is based on her great, great Grandmother, Annie, as well as another book titled "Annie connects with Boandik culture". We have both books in our kindergarten library so the children will have access to them after Aunty Michelle has her session with them.

### Sun safety:

During term one, all children are required to wear a hat and sunscreen when outside. We appreciate parents applying sunscreen before children have arrived at kindergarten and to ensure their child has their hat with them to wear at kindy. We have added a column to the sign-in sheet to indicate that sunscreen has been applied, and we would like this space ticked or initialled to show this has been done.

We will reapply sunscreen to your children after lunch and continue to remind children to keep their hats in their lockers when they are playing inside. Please ensure your child's hat is clearly labelled with your child's name.

Please let us know if your child has any special sunscreen needs. We use a 50+ SPF sunscreen here at kindy.

Fees: Thank you to the parents who have approached me about paying fees in instalments, either in cash, direct debit or Centrepay. We are more than happy to accommodate families so that it is easier for you to pay fees. Accounts for term 1 have been placed into children's files.

If you choose to pay in full, we would appreciate fees paid by the end of week 4 each term. If fees are not paid by week 5 and a payment plan is not being honoured then lunch care for your child will cease. Lunch care is provided at \$3.00 a day as it is not a funded service and comes at a cost to the kindergarten to pay for staff to cover this time.

Fees paid via bank transfer need to include your family code which is written on your invoice. If paying by cash, please ensure you write your child's name on an envelope and the amount enclosed and place it into the mailbox next to the office door. Thank you.

Family/Teacher meetings: We will be holding meetings from week 6 this term after your child has settled into kindy. These meetings are to help us develop a learning goal for your child in partnership with you. This learning goal will be the focus of our individual planning for your child.

A sheet of dates/times will be placed next to the pick up sheet for you to book in for a chat with Tracy and Donna. If none of the proposed dates suit you, please speak with Donna or Tracy about organising an alternative day.

### Washing and gardening roster

Term 1's roster has been put into your child's individual file. It has been organized alphabetically using the children's first names so if you don't have one in your file, your turn will happen during the year.

A copy of the roster is on the information board if you wish to check. We thank you for your help in this task.

### Facebook

We hope you enjoy the posts and photos on our Facebook page that aim to help keep you informed of things your child has been a part of during the week at kindy. Our intention this year is that we will aim to post at least one recap of the week at kindy via our Facebook page so if you are on Facebook but haven't yet liked our page, please feel free to check it out.

We only post photos if families have given permission for them to be included on our page, but if you have any concerns about the displaying of photos that reach the wider community, please do not hesitate to speak to staff.

### All About Me pages

Journals will be sent home soon to enable you to help your child create an 'All About Me' page. More information about this is stuck inside your child's journal. Please send your child's journal back to kindergarten after you have completed this project with your child. Each child will have the opportunity to share their page with their peers during group time this term as a way of getting to know each other a bit better.

## Community Walks

Our plan is to do short walks at the start of the term as we need to reinforce safety rules before and during the walks. Last week we practiced walking in a straight line...referred to as a 'snake line' as we walked across the road and down to the Domain playground. The children concentrated on staying behind the person in front of them as they walked along. After a play at the Domain, the children responded to the whistle being blown to tell them to assemble together ready to return to kindy.

We were very impressed with the group of children we took and will certainly practise this again.

We will also practise walking with a partner and holding their hand while staying together in line and crossing the road safely.

Walking to the Domain.



Tracy explains what to do when they hear the whistle.



Crossing the road safely...



...to get back to kindy.



## Term 1 calendar

A term calendar is attached to this newsletter and includes important events happening at kindy during term 1.

We are limited by Department for Education Covid restrictions at the moment, but once these are eased we will be able to visit places like the Millicent Library and local businesses in the main street area. We will begin our formal connections with Gladys Smith Early Learning Centre and our feeder schools later in the term or during Term 2.

You will notice on the term planner that Monday 4th April has been set aside for staff training in The Berry Street Education Model. The Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) provides **strategies for teaching and learning** that enables educators to increase engagement of students with complex, unmet learning needs and to successfully improve all students' self-regulation, relationships, wellbeing, growth and academic achievement. This staff training day is subject to our new Governing Council's approval and any children booked in on that day will be offered an alternative session to attend.

## Other things happening this term....

In week 8, we will be focussing on acceptance of our differences and celebration of our similarities as part of our 'Harmony Day' celebrations. Harmony Day occurs on **Monday March 21st** and is about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. It is a time for all of us to embrace cultural diversity and to share what we have in common. We will send more information about our special Harmony Day activities later in the term.

In week 10, we will offer a variety of **Easter** activities for the children to take part in, including stories/songs, cooking and creative art/craft experiences.

It looks like another busy but fun filled term for our kindergarten children.

## Transition Teddies

Our Kindergarten uses 'Transition Teddies' to assist our kindergarten children to settle into the new environment here at Millicent North. This initiative has been part of our Kindergarten program for a few years now and has been very successful. Every child receives a Transition Teddy bear which aims to provide your child with comfort and security when and if needed as some children find it challenging to separate from their parents/carers, and some children find it difficult when their usual teacher is away and replaced by a TRT.

These teddy bears stay at kindergarten for the duration of their owners time at kindergarten and at the end of the year children can keep their bears. We will include the teddies in our group time relaxation activities after lunch, using them as props for singing and as a companion to cuddle during our smartboard story time.

Teddy bears were lovingly knitted by volunteers in the community and donated to our children.

We are already noticing children forming connections with their teddy and turning to it when they need comforting or security.



Some very happy young people with their kindy teddy.



## Health Checks

In past years, we have a visit from a Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS) nurse to conduct 4 year old Health Checks.

At this stage this will not be held at our site due to COVID-19 restrictions but families who need to access CaFHS can do so. Speak with Donna if you need more information about this.

## Library

Library visits will start later in the term, and we will be taking small groups of children at a time. When we go to the library, we sit and listen to a story and then the children have the opportunity to borrow a library book to take home and read.

We encourage the children to bring their library bag to the library so that the book they borrow is protected. Can you please ensure that your child's library bag is always in their kindy bag so that they are able to borrow/return books when we visit each week?

If your child doesn't have a library bag, we have library bags with the kindy logo available to purchase for \$10 if you would like to buy one for your child.

We have put a library application/permission card form into each child's pocket. This will give them a card so they can borrow books from the Millicent Library. Can it please be filled out and returned to kindy to be processed. Thank you.

## Please remember....

- To label your child's clothes...it makes it so much easier for us to make sure nothing is lost.
- To pack your child's hat for them every day in term 1.
- To apply sunscreen to your child before they come to kindy at the beginning of their session.
- To pack a complete change of clothes for your child, including underwear.

Kindy hats with our logo are available here at kindy in a range of colours for \$10 if you need one for your child.



Thank you... to our children and families for a great start to the year. We appreciate our families taking note of the COVID-friendly advice and signing-in/QR coding, as well as wearing masks.

Enjoy the selection of photos from the first two weeks of term 1.

Donna, Tracy, Jo, Ro and Lisa.



*Tell me and I forget  
Teach me and I remember  
Involve me and I learn.*

*Benjamin Franklin*



**PLAY** is often talked about as if it were a relief from *Serious Learning*. But for children, **play IS serious learning.** **PLAY** is really *the work of childhood.*

notjustcute.com - Fred Rogers



We are very pleased to see the children settling in so well.





Play involving climbing, balancing and hanging prepares muscles for writing, builds confidence, sharpens hand-eye coordination, develops kinesthetic awareness, improves problem solving skills, teaches about gravity, and helps children learn to face fear and assess risk.

Plus, it's fun.



Make-believe play has been found to be crucial for building children's social competence, including their ability to self-regulate and cope emotionally.

Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Kathy Golenkoff, Roberta Michnick, Laura Berk, Dorothy Singer  
(A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool)

