



NSW Early Years Nature Connections Visit

On Saturday, the 9th March 2024, we were proud to showcase our preschool to Nature Connections who ran their first gathering for the year from our grounds. We were thrilled with the wonderful feedback from other Educators who were in awe of our beautiful surroundings and nature-based programme. Here is just a little of what we shared: *We are lucky to be surrounded by natural bushland and an abundance of wildlife, and believe that 'place', the specific contexts of our preschool, the local community and all its members (people, animals, water, sky, trees) are an integral part of children's learning, development and sense of belonging. We plan regular excursions to the local bush (our Bush Kinder program) and strive to embed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understandings of Country as an active and agential, deserving of our care and respect. The children and educators enact these learnings through class investigations, sustainability practices (gardening, composting, looking after our chickens), arts practices (clay, dance, charcoal), and Bush Kinder experiences.* Further information can be seen at : <https://www.facebook.com/nswearlyyearsnatureconnections>

At Preschool this month

Ramadan	11 th March onwards
Harmony Week	18-24th March
Purim	23 rd March 2024
National Ride to School Day	22 nd March
Last Day of Term 1	Friday 12 th April 2024
First Day of Term 2	Monday 29 th April
World Autism Day	2 nd April





HOW TO RECYCLE EASTER FOIL

This Easter, the foil wrapper from your chocolate bunny or eggs could become the aluminium in a can of soft drink. All aluminium foil can be recycled in your yellow lid bin.

Just make sure your foil is clean and rolled into a big ball. This stops small pieces of foil getting lost in the recycling process. Wait until you have a lot of foil to recycle, roll it up at least as big as a tennis ball and pop it in the yellow lid bin. With the foil wrappers all scrunched up together, no one will ever know how much Easter chocolate you've eaten.

Source: cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Bella's Focaccia



Many thanks to Christina for her recipe suggestion, providing ingredients and her bubbly sourdough starter.

INGREDIENTS

50–75 g bubbly, active sourdough starter
 375 g water
 20 g honey (optional)
 500g bread flour
 9 g fine sea salt

METHOD:

Whisk the sourdough starter, water and honey together in a bowl. Add the flour and salt. Mix to combine and then finish by hand to form a rough dough. Cover and let rest for 30 minutes. Then return to the bowl and work the dough into a ball.

Bulk Rise: Cover the bowl of dough with lightly oiled plastic wrap. Let the dough rise overnight at room temperature, about 12+ hours. The dough will double in size.

Second Rise: Pour 2 tbsp of olive oil onto a rimmed sheet pan. Use your hands to evenly coat the bottom and sides. Remove the dough onto the pan, and then flip it to coat both sides. Cover and let rest for 1 1/2- 2 hours or until very puffy. Preheat your oven to 220 C.

Assemble the Focaccia: Right before baking, gently dimple the dough with oiled fingertips. Start at the bottom of the pan and work your way to the top. As you dimple, the dough will naturally begin to stretch outwards. You should end up with a rustic rectangular or oval shape. If you are using a rectangular pan, the dough will naturally fill the shape of the pan.

Add Focaccia Toppings (optional): Press your preferred toppings into the dough. As the focaccia rises, the dough will puff up. Place the dough onto the centre rack. Bake for 25-30 minutes.

Our new preschool signs

We have collaborated with local Indigenous artist Leanne Tobin who has designed our newly installed preschool signs that you can enjoy displayed around the perimeter of our grounds.



Leanne is a proud descendent of the Buruberong and Wumali clans of the Dharug nation. She is highly a respected artist and a leading contemporary arts figure at a national level.

Leanne uses her art to tell local stories and to evoke an environmental conscience and respect towards the land and its original people. We feel Leanne's artist ethos is directly aligned to our preschool philosophy.

We feel so fortunate to showcase Leanne's work as a daily reminder of the significance of Dharug and Gundugarra history in our local area.



Thank you for coming to our gardening days

It was lovely to welcome families for our gardening afternoons on the 5th and 7th March and to see so many familiar faces. Both afternoons were mild and sunny and our families pitched in by planting, weeding, digging and potting seedlings. We were also fortunate enough to welcome some grandparents, what a treat for us all!

In between chats and afternoon tea, our garden enjoyed a tidy-up from some talented gardeners and others just beginning their gardening journey.



We would like to sincerely thank everyone who came along and donated their time, energy, enthusiasm and in some cases plants. It was wonderful to catch up and get to know our families a little better, allowing friendships to blossom and of course, to see the wonderful results in our garden. We are already looking forward to our next gardening day!



Well done Bella!

Congratulations to Bella from the Lilli Pilli room for completing her Certificate 3 in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Bella's hard work and determination has paid off and we are thrilled to acknowledge her achievement. Congratulations on this well-deserved career milestone.



Bowerbird Literature Review: What makes a Princess?

From abstract impressionism to jellyfish to fungi, the Bowerbird children have been busy exploring a multitude of ideas this term, but one of the most prominent topics of discussions has been all about Princesses. It all began one early February morning, when Clara, Jameson and Elke imagined they were Queen's and Princesses climbing the ropes outside and then later that afternoon, Tanjai begun crafting crowns of paper for her peers. Soon, the whole classroom, boys, and girls alike, were adorned with jewels and crowns, each exploring what it might mean to be a princess. As educators and teachers, we know that often children's ideas of Princesses are tied up in themes of gender and femininity, we wondered what information the Bowerbird children would share with us if we asked them explicitly – what makes a Princess? Of course, the children had a lot to say in response to this question...

Ellie told us that “Princesses need sparkly dresses, earrings and sparkly shoes.”

Edmund was sure that to be a Princess “You need long hair and a bow and some eyes. You need healthy food and lip balm.”

Eve told us that “You need to wear a dress and you need flowers in their garden.”

Teddy explained that a Princess must, “Have legs to walk. Princesses also need a castle and also, a friend to take care of them.”

Valerie explained “When you're happy. Sometimes it's sad because girls are Princesses and boys are knights! Yeah, it's not fair! Sometimes boys want to be Princesses.”

With interest, the Bowerbird educators listened to what the children had to say carefully. We noticed that as we expected, a lot of the children's views worked around strict gender norms, but that there were a few children who were beginning to think beyond all the pink and the glitter (as much as we still love that!)



Reading “The Worst Princess” by Anna Kemp and Sara Ogilvie inspired us to begin a project with the children, a literature review with the theme of Princesses and fairy tales. We hope that by exposing children to a variety of stories and texts they have the opportunity to broaden their ideas, develop their critical thinking skills to challenge bias, encourage the transfer of knowledge from one context to another, promote early literacy and language thinking, champion social justice and empower one another.

Since beginning our review and diving into a number of texts, the educators have begun to see a shift in the children's knowledge of what makes a Princess and what themes are common amongst fairy tales.

After reading “Emily and the Dragon” by Lyn Lee and David Cornish, Eve shared “It is rude to say that girls don't fight dragons. It might make them embarrassed. It's ok if the knight doesn't want to fight dragons.” Clara agreed “Yeah, he (the knight) is the boss of his own body!” When we watched an episode of Bluey “The Adventure”, Teddy shared “Princesses have castles and can protect themselves!” and Autumn noticed that in this story “They weren't wearing dresses.”

Reading “The Paper bag Princess” by Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko, the children showed empathy for the dragon who had used all of its fire. Shay and Ruby both expressed “That Princess needed to give the dragon some water!” It was the plot twist at the end of the story though which caught Jameson's attention, with a shrug she told us “I thought they were going to get married in the end.”

These changing ideas have also been expressed through the children's illustrations of Princesses. Where previously children focused on making sure their characters wore dresses and crowns (and of course, these do still make an appearance) the focus has shifted more towards narrative and what stories their portraits are portraying. The Princesses in our classrooms are now driving cars, owning bears and fish as pets and starting families. Perhaps their understandings are shifting, changing, and deepening?

We look forward to seeing where our review will take us...



AGM and New Committee Members

Our AGM was held on Monday 18th March 2024 and the following committee members were elected:

President: Jessie Hogan
Vice President: Christina Kasavetis
Secretary: Caitlin Hicks
Treasurer: Lucie Novakova
Ordinary Member: Ji Eun Lee
Ordinary Member: Effie Kasavetis
Ex Officio – Alison Staniford

We are so grateful for these community members who have donated their time and expertise to help their preschool. Without their efforts, our preschool could not operate.

Would you like a family/teacher meeting?

During the next term break, we are offering families the opportunity to sit down with their child's teachers to chat about their time here at preschool.

We have observations of learning to share, goals to discuss and would love to meet to collaborate with you in your child's learning.

Meeting days will be as follows:

Monday 15th April 2024 – Bilby families who attend on Thurs/Fri

Tuesday 23rd April 2024

Lilli Pilli, and Bower Bird Mon/Tues/Wed/Thu/Fri
Bilby Mon/Tues/Wed

If you would like to meet with your child's teachers, please choose an available time on the sheet in your child's room.

Our Children's Voices

