FOUNDATION INFORMATION

2016
OVERVIEW OF FOUNDATION PROGRAM

Successfully rearing children requires good teamwork. We feel that the school plays a vital role in the development of your child, both socially and academically. Open communication between home and school is vital. It is essential that we are aware of any situation at home that may affect learning or behaviour at school. Equally important is the communication of what we, as teachers, are doing with your child at school.

In the Foundation year we are looking at development in the following areas:

- Physical growth and confidence will be enhanced over the year through our Physical Education program, as well as our Perceptual Motor Program (PMP).
- Social and emotional development, with children learning to cope with daily routines and rules, as well as sorting out friendships, values, co-operation and sharing. This occurs through outside play experiences, individual and class discussions and classroom situations designed to help children develop their own coping skills. Please communicate any concerns that you have, or that your child mentions, to avoid the development of unnecessary fears.
- Visual and auditory skills (what is seen and heard), vital in the reading process.
- Conceptual development resulting from experiences where children need to observe, sort out information, see patterns, find out for themselves and discuss what is going on around them. When exposed to a rich environment of varied and interesting experiences, children will naturally develop skills in problem solving, reasoning, comprehension and number concepts.

Personal Qualities

We aim to develop such skills as:
- listening attentively
- initiative
- understanding and following of directions
- caring for own belongings
- respecting the property of others
- accepting responsibility
- good manners
- resilience
- consideration for others
- working co-operatively
- working without distracting others
- approaching work with confidence

The “You Can Do It” program focuses on Confidence, Persistence, Organization, Getting Along and Resilience
Integrated Curriculum

Under our curriculum document AusVELS, the first year at school is now referred to at Foundation level. AusVELS outlines three interwoven purposes of education that will equip our students to manage themselves and others, understand the world and act effectively. These interwoven purposes are: 1) Physical, Personal and Social Learning, 2) Discipline-based learning and 3) Interdisciplinary Learning. The Integrated Curriculum offers a unique opportunity for students to make these links.

Each week topics are related to children’s experiences, or may develop from a picture story book. Topics cover various areas of the curriculum - English, Mathematics, Science, History, Technology, Health and Physical Education, The Arts (which includes Music, Drama, Art, etc) and Interpersonal Development.

We aim to link much of the children’s learning to our current topic. For example: when studying plants, children may read and write about plants (language), measure plants (mathematics), draw plants (art), eat plants (health, humanities and personal learning) grow plants (science).

Integrated Topics

- **Nursery Rhymes and Traditional Stories**

- **My Place in a Living World**
  - We grow and change
  - Living Things
  - Life cycles
  - How plants grow
  - Food - the food groups
  - - where our food comes from
  - Sustainability

- **All About Me**
  - Myself
  - My body
  - My family
  - My friends

- **Circus**

- **I Live in Australia**
  - Traditional Aboriginal Lifestyle
  - Native Animals
  - Australia Today
  - Farming, housing, food, technology
Language
Language develops through various activities which combine speaking, listening, reading, writing and spelling.

Reading
Our reading program aims to foster an interest in books and the enjoyment of reading. We base our work on known stories and rhymes as well as children’s language.

When your children bring home their first books, share their excitement with them. At first, they will ‘read’ by remembering sentence patterns or looking at the pictures. This is a natural stage in learning to read. As they get to understand more about reading they will use the print message more.

Each evening your child will bring home a book for *SHARED* reading with you. At first these will be *teacher-made* books based on known rhymes or the children’s own language and are related to the week’s topic. A familiar sentence e.g. “*The little red hen made some bread*” will also be investigated. As well, *commercially produced books* will also be sent home.

We encourage children to choose books which interest them and to establish the pattern of reading every night, so please return books each day. You should be aware that the children do not yet know the vocabulary in these books, and will need your help. It is important that you encourage your child to enjoy the books and make sense of what they read.

Encourage
- Looking at the pictures
- Predicting what makes sense
- Looking at starting sounds
- Identifying familiar words

Words and letters related to the weekly topic will be placed on the word rings for revision at home and at school. Children need to learn both the name and the sound of each letter.

As the year progresses, the children will be involved in intensive, small group instruction during the first session of the day. This is known as “Guided Reading”.
Handwriting/Fine Motor Skills
In this area we aim to provide each child with the fine motor skills needed to write, using correct formation in the lower case letters of the alphabet.

Initially the children will be given experience with various manipulative activities which will include fingerplays, drawing, coloring, tracing, bead threading and “cut and paste” activities.

How Parents Can Help at Home
• Help children to use the correct pencil grip whenever possible.
• Provide coloring pencils and activities that allow for ‘cut and paste’ and further development of fine motor skills.
• Help children write their names in Victorian Cursive Script.
• Provide encouragement and praise for your child’s efforts.

Victorian Modern Cursive

*a Starting Points*
Speaking Skills
Children are encouraged to speak in a clear and audible manner. Please discourage ‘baby talk’ as this will become a source of embarrassment to your child as he/she becomes older.

Auditory Skills
This is a very important aspect of the language program. Children are encouraged through games and activities to develop further competence in auditory discrimination, following directions, listening to stories, etc.

Spelling
Spelling is taught in conjunction with the topic being covered. In reading and writing, teachers model correct spelling and challenge children to predict and analyse the structure of words.

Beginning soon, a new letter (both the name of the letter and the sound) will be introduced each week and those already known will be revised. Please ask your child about the letter of the week and help him/her to find new words for our lists or suitable pictures from magazines to bring along to school.

Parents can help at home by following the lead set at school:

- Reinforce letter names and related sounds at home.
- Talk about words in stories.
- Pick a letter - can you see it in any other words?
- Look and be aware of words around you - traffic words, shopping words, point out signs, etc. on outings.
- Play “I Spy” or similar letter games using letter names and sounds.
- Sing the alphabet.

Learning to Write
Children enter school with a strong desire to write. All the drawing they have done at home is a splendid background to writing they will do at school.

To become fluent at writing a child needs to write regularly. Mainly we ‘learn to write by writing’ - that is, by regularly working out on paper the ideas that are of interest or concern to us.

The aim in writing is to express ideas clearly for a reader, that is, to get the message or meaning right.

In the Foundation grade the children are encouraged to ‘write’ their stories through pictures, written symbols, letters and words where they can. Try asking your child about the story behind the pictures. You’ll be amazed by some of the responses.
What Parents Can Do

- DO encourage your child to write often to friends and relatives, and also to write in a personal and/or family journal (diary).
- DO respond to the message or story of your child’s writing, rather than mark out spelling errors. (Everyone takes many years to learn to spell, so don’t think you must correct everything your child writes; but do help when the child asks you how to spell a word).
- DO provide a quiet place for writing, away from the noise of T.V. Ask what is happening in school writing. Do some writing yourself. Invite your child to add to letters or Emails you write to relatives. Why not become a note-writing family, leaving notes around for one another?
- DO help your child to turn stories and other writings into ‘books’ by stapling them into brightly illustrated covers. Older children can write such books for younger ones. A collection grows.

Mathematical Skills

We aim to develop mathematical skills through the manipulation of a variety of materials and individual discussion of these experiences with the children.

Number and Algebra

- Count from 1 to 10, then 10 to 20
- Count collections of objects up to 10 and beyond
- Compare and order groups
- Double numbers e.g. 3 + 3    4 + 4
- Use terms first, second and so on to indicate place in a sequence up to tenth
- Write numerals from 1 to 10, then to 20
- Write and solve simple equations
- Recognise coins
- Continue a given pattern
- Copy a pattern
- Create a pattern
- Explore patterns in number and space
- Make rough estimates and check their work
- Use a calculator to represent and explore numbers
Measurement and Geometry
- Measure, compare and order length, capacity and mass through activities using a wide variety of objects
- Estimate the size of everyday objects
- Order daily activities in a simple sequence
- Relate days and months to events in their lives
- Understand that clocks are used to tell the time
- Make and draw simple lines e.g. curved, and shapes e.g. triangle.
- Use words relating to position e.g. put the box under the table.
- Use terms relating to shape e.g. flat, curved, round
- Fit figures and objects together based on shape

Statistics and Probability
- Begins to understand the part played by chance in everyday life e.g. weather, dice games
- Decide on the likeliness of an event occurring using the language ‘likely, unlikely, impossible’, etc.
- Represent people or objects in pictorial displays to record results of collections e.g. graphs

How You Can Help In This Area
We are all surrounded by shapes, numbers and other materials relevant to developing children’s mathematical awareness. It is most important to help your child maintain a curiosity and interest in this vital area. Many parents make the mistake of referring to their own dislike or lack of success in Mathematics. This can initiate negative feelings within a child. We aim to have children learn and develop through success. You can assist our program in many simple ways:
- Discuss any work that comes home, display it to show that you consider it is worthwhile.
- Let your child teach you our number rhymes - fun in the car.
- Explain money you are using, prices, etc. Allow children to have some money of their own to spend as they wish (in moderation!!)
- Simple board and card games will help with number recognition, counting, shapes and direction.
- A great deal of learning can occur during everyday household activities. e.g. How much water do we need in the sink? In the bath? The bottle is half empty. Which is the biggest saucepan? Who is the tallest? I need the longest hose for the sprinkler. We have tea at 6.30, bedtime is 7.30, etc.
- Many car games are great fun, as well as encouraging awareness of the environment, e.g. number of red cars, vehicles, stop signs, pedestrian crossings, number plates, house numbers, shop signs, etc.