



2020 - Term 1

Welcome

A very warm welcome to all our new families joining us in 2020, and welcome back to those of you returning for another year of fun and learning.

I trust that you all enjoyed your holidays and are ready for the many experiences we provide that will allow your child to grow and develop.

We also offer our families many opportunities to participate and experience a fuller life within our community, and we certainly hope that you will embrace these opportunities and become a vital participant in your child's learning.

For many of you, your child's first year of kindergarten will mark a significant milestone in your lives. It can be exciting, anxious and fun all at once.

We have a wonderfully talented team of staff who together in 2014 and 2018 managed to secure a service rating of "Exceeding" through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

This team holds a wide range of experience, and it is shaping up to be an exciting year for all.

Please do not hesitate to approach Anna, Angela or Cristina should you have any enquiries regarding your child, or our program. We encourage a good, strong relationship between you and your child's teacher, and this will only be possible if the lines of communication remain open and honest.

"Tell me and I forget.....teach me and I remember.....involve me and I learn"

Benjamin Franklin

We have children who are at high risk of Anaphylaxis.

We ask that you do not pack nuts or nut products in your children's snacks and lunches.

Your actions will help to support these children by providing a safe environment.

Term Dates: 2020

29th Jan - 27th Mar

14th Apr - 26th June

13th July - 18th Sept

5th Oct - 18th Dec

Diary Dates - Please enter these dates into your calendar

19th February	Full sessions begin for Green Group
24th February	Full sessions begin for Red Group
25th February	Pancake Day - Red Group
2nd March	Meet and Greet - Red Group
2nd March	Meet and Greet - Yellow Group
3rd March	Meet and Greet - Blue Group
5th March	Meet and Greet - Green Group
9th March	Kindergarten Closed - Public Holiday - Labour Day
14th March	Working Bee
16th March	Red Group - Photo Day
19th March	Green Group - Photo Day
19th March	Parent Information Evening
23rd March	Easter Egg Hunt - Yellow Group
24th March	Easter Egg Hunt - Blue
25th March	Easter Egg Hunt - Red Group

Green Group - 4 year old

Welcome everyone, I am so excited to be teaching Green Group this year and I look forward to getting to know and work with you and your amazing children.

The first few weeks of Term 1 will be spent getting to know each other, the Kindergarten routine and rules. My aim is for all the children to settle in happily and for them to feel comfortable and secure within the Kindergarten environment. Establishing a sense of belonging takes time, especially in a large group. Attending kinder sessions in 2 smaller groups in the first few weeks will help your child settle better and get to know each other and the staff.

Kindergarten is a wonderful time in your child's life and one that he/she will remember fondly. Childhood does not last for long. A child's early years needs to be spent discovering themselves and others, the world around them and developing their emerging thoughts, skills and values. Play is an intrinsic tool children use to become active, passionate learners who enjoy gaining knowledge and information by discovery, investigation and invention in their own way and at their own pace. The very best way to give children what they need is to provide an environment that is interesting to explore, safe and is filled with people who will respond and support the child's emotional needs. At the heart of everything we do, the child is our focus. Your children will get the best start to their educational years here at the Stables Kindergarten, so let 2020 begin...

Anna, Rosanna & Danielle



Red Group - 4 year old

Welcome to all the wonderful Red Group families! I hope you have had a safe and relaxing holiday. I am thrilled to be teaching your children and cannot wait to meet you all again.

The first few weeks here at kindergarten will be ensuring that the children feel safe and secure in their new environment. Moving into a 4-year old program is a huge change for the children. Forming trusting relationships with both staff and peers is essential in beginning to separate from parents as well as creating a positive learning environment.

Our program is inspired by our creative and inquisitive children. Term 1 will see us getting to know one another, getting to know the rules, daily routine and exploring the children's interests as they emerge.

We are so very happy to welcome you all to our Red Group family and look forward to an exciting and memorable year ahead.

Cristina, Rosanna & Danielle



Yellow and Blue Groups - 3 year old

A warm welcome to the children and families in yellow and blue group for 2020. MaryAnn and I are excited to be working with your children and we look forward to having a wonderful year together.

In the first few weeks the children will attend shorter sessions so that they become familiar with all aspects of the kindergarten, as well as slowly getting to know MaryAnn and myself and the children in their group. Our program for term 1 will focus on the children settling into the kindergarten. This involves -

- being able to say goodbye to their parent
- becoming familiar with the routine of the session (e.g. packing up, sitting on the mat, washing hands, sitting for snack time)
- becoming familiar with our kinder rules
- becoming familiar with the indoor and outdoor environments

As the weeks progress, the children will begin to feel comfortable and safe at kindergarten. This will allow the children to develop their confidence, especially to say goodbye to their parent. As all children are different, this will vary and for some this will take longer to develop.

During the year, the program will provide many opportunities and experiences for the children to develop and practice their skills and develop their knowledge through a variety of fun, educational, hands on, play based learning experiences. The children will develop their -

- social and emotional skills
- language and communication skills
- physical skills (gross and fine motor skills)
- creativity, imagination, independence and confidence

Please let me know if you have any questions about how your child is developing at kinder, or if you have any feedback/suggestions/ideas to add to our program. The best time to have a chat is after the session when all the children have been picked up, or we can make another time.

MaryAnn and I look forward to a wonderful year together filled with laughter, fun and learning.

Angela & MaryAnn



Caring for our environment and reducing paper waste

Worldwide, more than 300 million tonnes of paper are produced each year, consuming 300 million forested acres and requiring huge amounts of chemicals, pesticides, energy and water.

Reducing paper consumption lessens the worldwide environmental impact of the paper industry and keeps millions of tonnes of waste out of landfills.

To help reduce the impact on our environment and also to reduce printing costs, we will only be providing the Term 1 Newsletter in hard copy.

Terms 2, 3 and 4 will be available on the website and the Kindergarten App.

You will be sent a reminder on the Kindergarten App when the newsletter is available.

For families that require a hardcopy, please see your teachers.

Keeping our children safe

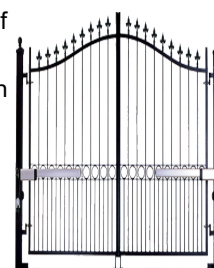
At times, it has been brought to our attention that some parents/carers are not as careful with the closing of gates as they should be.

Please, always shut every gate behind you and only ever allow **your** child/children out of the kindergarten grounds.

A busy car park and a busy Childs Road is an ever present danger.

Our children only average 4 years of age and the dangers of traffic means nothing to most of them.

If a child near you is not with an adult, please do not let them out.



Fundraising

Welcome to the Stables Kindergarten for 2020.

We feel very fortunate for our children to be at this kindergarten and in turn provide our support by being part of the Fundraising Team.

Each year we run several activities to raise money for resources and to provide experiences for all our children during their kindergarten sessions.

Look out for the following fundraising events during 2020:

Bunnings Sausage Sizzle, Mother's Day Stall, Hot Food and Treat Day's (4-year-old groups), Easter Raffle, Billy G's Cookie Dough, Father's Day Raffle and Christmas Raffle.

We will from time to time ask for assistance for activities run during each kinder group's session. Look out for alerts on the Kinder App and for information near the sign in book.

Take part when you can, there is no requirement to become part of the fundraising team, but we will need help every now and then.

Enjoy the year ahead and we look forward to seeing you at the kindergarten.

Vanessa and Lilitiana



Laundry

A roster system will commence to assist with the kindergarten laundry.

Each family will be asked throughout the year to help by taking home some washing. This will include items such as art smocks, tea towels etc....

We take great pride in our kindergarten and ensuring that these items are clean and ready for the children's use.

Any support that you give will be greatly appreciated.

Signing In and Out

You will be required to sign your child in at the beginning of the session, and sign them out when picking them up.

It only takes a moment to check that you are signing in the correct place, and this will ensure that staff have accurate attendance records at all times.

Also please remember to check your child's communication pocket for any notes so that you keep up to date with important information.

Sun Hats

As per our Sun Protection Policy, we are a Sun Smart Service and therefore, sun hats must be worn from the 1st September through till 30th of April.

Parents please ensure that your child has a hat for kindergarten (preferably a wide brimmed hat), and that it has your child's name clearly labelled inside.

If your child does not have a hat, they will be asked to play in the shaded areas of the playground.

Committee Meeting Dates

The following dates have been established for our Committee of Management meetings.

These meetings will be held at the kindergarten at 5:15pm.

March 4th

May 27th

August 12th

October 21st

November 17th - Annual General Meeting

Working Bee Dates

Term 1 - Saturday 14th March

Term 2 - Saturday 16th May

Term 3 - Saturday 15th August

Term 4 - Saturday 24th October

(the dates may be subject to change, in the event that they do we will endeavour to provide as much notice as possible.)

Central Enrolment System - 4 year old Kindergarten

The Stables Kindergarten is part of the City of Whittlesea Central Enrolment System.

All applications for a four year old place must be lodged with the City of Whittlesea Kindergarten Enrolment and Support Officer.

If your child attends a 3 year old program, at the kindergarten, **they do not automatically receive a place for the 4 year old program**. Parents need to make a separate application via the council for this.

Council will accept applications from the first working day in March each year, two years prior to the year of kindergarten attendance and up until 30 June of the year prior to attendance.

Parents of children born in the months of January to April, have the choice of which year to enroll their child including the year the child is eligible or the following year.

Application forms can be downloaded from the council's website:

www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Application forms are submitted at council along with a non refundable application fee.

Commencing in July of the year prior to your child attending kindergarten, offers of placement will be made in order of application date.

Council's Kindergarten and Enrolment Support Officer will confirm your child's placement in writing.

If applications for a specific kindergarten are oversubscribed, either the second or third preference will be offered.

Parent Helpers - Volunteers 2020

Commencing January 2016, all adults in a parent helper/volunteer capacity are required to have a Working with Children's Check. This will also apply to parents assisting with excursions.

The link below will help you with the application process.

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/lodging+your+application/>

4 Year Old Enrolment Application Timeline - City of Whittlesea

<u>Date of Birth Range</u>	<u>Year Attending Kindergarten</u>	<u>Applications Open</u>
1/5/2015 to 30/4/2016	2020	1 March 2018
1/5/2016 to 30/4/2017	2021	1 March 2019
1/5/2017 to 30/4/2018	2022	2 March 2020
1/5/2018 to 30/4/2019	2023	1 March 2021
1/5/2019 to 30/4/2020	2024	1 March 2022

Applications for 3 year old Kindergarten

Enrolment application forms for our 3 year old programs can be downloaded from our website or you can obtain a hard copy at the kindergarten.

We reviewed our Enrolment and Orientation Policy (September 2018) and this now reflects the following eligibility criteria and new cut off date:

- ⇒ Priority of access children
- ⇒ Children that have Stables Kindergarten as their 1st preference for 4 year old kindergarten
- ⇒ Siblings currently attending the kindergarten
- ⇒ Children that will attend a primary school in our local community
- ⇒ Families that have had older children attend our kinder in previous years

Children need to have turned three by the 30th April in the year they are attending.

Enrolment applications will be accepted any time after the child has turned 2 years of age.

Car Parking

Please note the signs in the carpark have changed to 15 minute parking.

If you are a parent on duty or have a meeting with the teachers or Nadia, we can give you a daily permit. This permit will need to be returned to the kindergarten when you are ready to leave.

PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- ⇒ **NO STANDING**
- ⇒ **RADIO STATION PARKING BAYS (Permit Area 1)**
- ⇒ **KINDERGARTEN STAFF PARKING BAYS (Permit Area 2)**
- ⇒ **IN FRONT OF THE 24 HOUR ACCESS AREA**



We ask that you do not park at the kindergarten if your child is not in session. We have 104 families at the kindergarten and if all parents parked here because their child attends (whilst dropping off or picking up siblings from) St. Francis of Assisi Primary School it would leave the families in session with no where to park.

Last year, some of our families received \$160.00 fines, and I'm sure you will all agree that it is money well spent in other areas of your lives.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Parent Information Folders

Parent Information:

This folder contains information regarding community activities and events both local and in the broader community, invitations to family services training sessions, and also health and wellbeing information sent by various government departments.



The folders are located on the sign in/out table

Primary Schools in Our Areas:

This folder will hold brochures and open day information sent to us by our neighboring schools. Please feel free to take any brochures that may interest you.

Translation Services

Throughout the year families will receive many notices.

Should any family require these notices to be translated into their first/home language, please do not hesitate to speak to your child's teacher.

Depending on government funding, we can also provide limited interpreter services should anyone require this.



Help

We welcome and appreciate parent's/guardian's input and helping out with the program. Therefore if you would like to share a particular passion of yours with the children, please see your child's teacher.

Last year we had parents come in and read stories and sing songs in different languages, and talk to the children about cultural celebrations important to their families. Please see your child's teacher if you would like to help.

“No Jab, No Play”

Under the new ‘No Jab, No Play’ legislation, before enrolling a child, early childhood services will have to first obtain evidence that the child is:

- fully immunised for their age OR
- on a vaccination catch-up program OR
- unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons.

‘Conscientious objection’ is not an exemption under the ‘No Jab No Play’ legislation.

Why are vaccinations so important?

Vaccination is one of the most effective interventions to prevent disease worldwide. Modern vaccines provide high levels of protection against an increasing number of diseases which, in some cases, can be fatal. Worldwide, it is estimated that immunisation programs prevent approximately 2.5 million deaths each year.

The current immunisation rate in Victoria for children under 5 years of age is around 92 per cent; however immunisation coverage of 95 per cent is necessary to halt the spread of particularly virulent diseases such as measles.

Immunisation not only protects those people who have been vaccinated, it also protects those in our community who may be unable to receive vaccines themselves, by reducing the prevalence and spread of disease.

What immunisations are required for children at childcare and kindergarten?

Under the new legislation, children will be required to be fully vaccinated for their age.

For more information, view the immunisation schedule for vaccines available under the National Immunisation Program, and when they should be received

Who will the ‘No Jab, No Play’ law impact and how?

These laws will apply to all early childhood education and care services in Victoria providing:

- long day care, kindergarten, occasional care, family day care

Why is conscientious objection not an exemption under the legislation?

The purpose of removing this exemption is to ensure as many children as possible are vaccinated against serious and potentially life-threatening illnesses.

If parents/carers have questions or concerns about immunisation or particular vaccines, they should seek answers from a qualified source, such as a GP or immunisation nurse. The Better Health Channel also provides quality-assured information online.

What is considered a ‘medical exemption’ under ‘No Jab, No Play’ and what documentation is required as evidence?

Some children may be exempt from the requirement to be fully vaccinated on medical grounds.

Examples of valid medical reasons that a child could not be fully vaccinated include:

- an anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of a particular vaccine, or
- an anaphylactic reaction to any vaccine component
- has a disease which lowers immunity (such as leukemia, cancer, HIV / AIDS, SCID), or
- is having treatment which lowers immunity (such as chemotherapy).

Parents/carers who think their child may require a medical exemption to one or more vaccines should consult their GP.

If a child had a medical reason they cannot be vaccinated, a GP needs to complete and sign a Medicare Immunisation Exemption Medical Contraindication Form, and send it to the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR).

The parent then needs to obtain an updated Immunisation History Statement from the ACIR that indicates the child was up-to-date with all the vaccines that they can have, and listed the vaccines that they cannot have due to a medical contraindication.

This statement needs to be provided by the parent to the early childhood service to finalise enrolment, and also throughout the year if an update is required.

Never Leave Children in Cars

As the temperature soars, a campaign that reminds parents **NOT** to leave their children in cars will run again this summer.

Kidsafe's General Manager Jason Chambers says parents need to be aware that the temperature inside a car can be 20 to 30 degrees warmer than outside the car, usually within the first five minutes of parking.

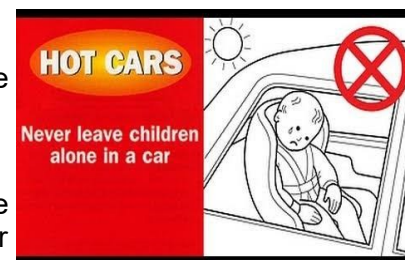
"In summer this can mean the temperature can be as high as 60 degrees in a matter of minutes," Mr Chambers says.

"For young children, it is especially important they are not left in the car because their body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult in a short time. This can result in dehydration, which can lead to heat stroke, which can be fatal".

Leaving the windows down slightly has little effect on the inside temperature.

Not only is it dangerous to leave children in a car, it is also illegal.

This summer, the Never Leave Kids in Cars campaign will continue and will send the message that our most precious valuables - our children - should never be left in the car.



Birthday celebrations at kindergarten

After much consideration and consultation with the staff regarding how children's birthdays are celebrated at kindergarten, we would appreciate it if families could limit the birthday treat to a small piece of cake/cupcake or a small lollipop (size of a chup-a-chup) or a Freddo Frog.

If supplying cake/cupcakes please provide a full list of ingredients.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please see your child's teacher.



Updating your settings on the Skoolbag App

Our kindergarten has our own Skoolbag iPhone and Android App to help us communicate more effectively with our parent/carer community. We are asking parents/carers to install our Skoolbag Kindergarten App. This new form of communication will allow us to send alerts to you **quickly and efficiently**. For example when the newsletter is available for you to read on our website, reminders of events and any other notifications.

Installing the SkoolBag for the first time - iPhone and iPad Users

1. Click the "App Store" icon on your Apple device.
2. Search for "SkoolBag App", click "Get" then click "Open"
3. Click "Allow" notification
4. Click "Ok" for Quick Tour and follow directions
5. Enter your email and password (remember to record these for future reference)
6. Click "Add/Remove" and search for "Stables Kindergarten"

Installing the SkoolBag for the first time – Android device

1. Click the "App Store" icon.
2. Search for "SkoolBag App", click "Install" then click "Open"
3. Click "Ok" for Quick Tour and follow directions
4. Enter your email and password (remember to record these for future reference)
5. Click "Add/Remove" and search for "Stables Kindergarten"

Should you require assistance changing your settings, please don't hesitate to see your child's teacher or Nadia.

A change for the whole family

Starting kindergarten is not only a change for your child.

Amid the excitement and preparation it can be important to take a moment to think about how this change affects you and your family.

As you help your child prepare for the changes ahead, it is important to monitor your own feelings. Having your child start kindergarten may lead to a new routine for you and your family. There may also be a period of adjustment as you begin to connect with the kindergarten community. Thinking a little about how things are going to change for everyone can help you to make sure the whole family is ready for starting kindergarten.

Mixed Emotions

As your child reaches this milestone, you may be feeling a sense of loss as they are spending more time out of the family home and in somebody else's care. Or perhaps you are worried about how your child will settle into their new setting, cope with new learning tasks and make friends. You may also be feeling excited and proud as your child is growing up and starting a new phase in their life. If you have other children in the family, they too may be experiencing a mix of emotions about the brother or sister starting school.

It is important to monitor your own reactions and consider what you may need during this time. Try to recognise when you are feeling stressed and the potential causes. This will help you to respond appropriately and think about what else you might need to do to prepare for starting kindergarten. Planning some enjoyable or relaxing activities to help you manage your own emotions can be really helpful.

Your child is also likely to be aware of how you are feeling and this can influence their reaction to kindergarten. If you appear confident about the challenges ahead and express a positive outlook, this will help your child to feel confident about starting kindergarten.

A New Family Routine

Take some time to think about how your family will adjust to the new routine. If you are a working parent, you may need to consider arrangements for drop off and pick up with your partner, family members or friends.

If your primary role has been mainly at home looking after our child, there might be a period of adjustment as your child is away from you for longer hours.

Your child may also feel exhausted with all the changes they are experiencing and you may consider adjusting the routine to allow periods of rest.

Supportive Relationships

Supportive relationships can help everyone cope in difficult or challenging times.

Talking through your concerns with your partner, friends and family, or your child's early childhood educator, can help to support you during your child's transition to kindergarten.

It can be really helpful at this time to connect with other families at your child's kindergarten. It is likely that they too are experiencing similar emotions.

Sharing your concerns, hopes and experiences can be comforting and you may learn some useful tips or ideas.

It can be helpful to join in any social activities the kindergarten has to offer or arrange to meet up with some of the other parents.

Connecting with your Child's Kindergarten

This is a good time to start linking in with our child's kindergarten community, which will help your family to feel supported and allow you to develop new relationships. Building connections between your family and the school will also help your child adjust to their new setting as you are able to provide and share valuable knowledge about your child. There may be opportunities where your child's kindergarten will seek information about your child. At other times you might find opportunities to communicate with them and take steps to become a part of the kindergarten community.

In preparing for kindergarten, it will be helpful to:

- Share information about your child and their previous environment.
- Speak to your child's early childhood educator if you are concerned about a particular issue (e.g.: your child's fear of using the kindergarten's toilets, separation anxiety).

Once your child has started kindergarten, there are many different ways you can continue to build connections. It is important to be involved in a way that suits you and your family. It can help to:

- Maintain regular communication with your child's early learning educator. This includes talking to them about your child's needs and interests, and discussing ways that the kindergarten can support you.
- Stay informed through reading the information sent home and participating in the experiences/events offered throughout the course of the year.
- Look out for social opportunities where your family can build relationships with other families.
- Take an interest in your child's learning. Talk to your child's early childhood educator about what they are learning and how you can support this at home. Ask your child about their day and acknowledge their efforts in learning tasks.
- Look for opportunities to share your knowledge, ideas and experiences with the kindergarten (e.g.: volunteering, sharing cultural traditions and customs).

Remember everything you do makes a difference in supporting your child's learning and development, and building a positive relationship with your kindergarten community. If you are not sure how to be involved, please see your child's teacher.

Reducing the risk of an Asthma attack in February

Throughout the year there are significant increases or “spikes”, in asthma presentations to hospitals and emergency departments. Approximately 1 in 9 children in Australia have asthma and for children with asthma these spikes usually occur towards the end of the holiday period as they return to day care, pre-school and school.

Why does the “spike” occur? -While there have not been direct links established, the February “asthma spike” is believed to be largely due to children coming into contact with asthma triggers that they have had time away from, as they are now returning to a pre-school/school environment.

Some common triggers: Colds and Flu’s, Activity/exercise, Pollens/moulds, Animal fur/dust mites

What can parents/carers do to avoid asthma attacks at kindergarten?

- ⇒ Ensure that you have provided the kindergarten with an updated Asthma Action Plan
- ⇒ Ensure that you bring to kindergarten your child’s preventer/reliever medication along with the spacer
- ⇒ Ensure that your child knows how to recognise early symptoms of an asthma attack.

All our staff have undergone extensive Asthma Management Training (nationally accredited), therefore should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to ask.

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework took effect on 1 January 2012 with key requirements being phased in overtime. Requirements such as qualifications educator-to-child ratios and other key staffing arrangements being phased in between 2012 and 2020.

The new system replaces existing state and territory licensing and national quality assurance processes.

The objectives of the National Quality Framework are:

- *to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services*
- *to improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services*
- *to promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services*
- *to establish a system of national integration and shared responsibility between participating jurisdictions and the Commonwealth in the administration of the National Quality Framework*
- *to improve public knowledge, and access to information, about the quality of education and care services*
- *to reduce the regulatory and administrative burden for education and care services by enabling information to be shared between participating jurisdictions and the Commonwealth*

In short all kindergartens in Australia are now be part of an accreditation process as set out below:

Week 1: Notice of Visit

Week 3: Quality Improvement Plan is submitted by the kindergarten

Week 5-8: Visit Occurs

Approx 3-5 weeks after the visit:

Draft report is emailed to the kindergarten for review

Approx 5-7 weeks after the visit:

Feedback is giving by the kindergarten to the Authorised Officer.

If all parties are in agreement

Approx 8 weeks after the visit:

Final report containing the services overall rating is finalised and email to the kindergarten.

Each services results are published for viewing on the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website (similar to the Myschools website)

Throughout the year we will be asking for our families to assist us with this process.

We will continue reviewing our current kindergarten policies of which we have 35 mandated and asking parents/carers to be part of a sub-committee to review policies as they expire. I envisage 3-4 parents forming this sub-committee. You do not need to sit in on every individual policy review, you may choose to assist with one or two.

This is a very important process and we are reliant on input from our families, so if you are able to assist by volunteering a couple of hours of your time to do this, we would be very grateful.

Vitamin D - What you need to know

Vitamin D is important for bone and muscle health. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium and phosphate from food, which are important for healthy and strong bones.

Only a few foods (some types of fish) naturally contain vitamin D, and it is hard to get enough vitamin D from food alone. Margarine, baby formula and some types of milk have added vitamin D, but most people only get about a quarter (or even less) of their vitamin D needs from food. Most vitamin D is made in the skin when it is exposed to the sun.

As well as causing problems with bones and muscles, there is evidence that low vitamin D is linked to other health problems including: a higher risk of bowel cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, problems with immunity (how the body fights infections) and autoimmune diseases (including diabetes).

Signs and symptoms of low vitamin D (or vitamin D deficiency)

Many people with low vitamin D do not have symptoms, but some children with low vitamin D get bone and muscle pain. Very low vitamin D can lead to soft bones, causing rickets in children and a condition called osteomalacia (*os-tee-oh-mah-lay-shee-ah*) in adolescents and adults. Rickets only occurs when children are growing – if a child has softer bones from low vitamin D, the bones can bend and cause 'bow legs' or 'knock knees', as well as other changes. See our fact sheet [Rickets](#).

Low vitamin D can cause low calcium, which can lead to muscle cramps in children. Low calcium can also cause seizures (convulsions or fits), particularly in young babies.

Children at risk of low vitamin D

- Children with very dark skin. The dark colour of their skin (melanin) acts as a natural sunscreen and increases the time they need in the sun to make vitamin D naturally.
- Children whose skin is rarely exposed to the sun e.g. those who stay inside or who wear covering clothing.
- Babies born prematurely.
- Breastfed babies who have one or more of the above risk factors. Breast milk is the best type of food for babies, but it does not contain much vitamin D. A baby will get their initial store of vitamin D from their mother; so, they are at risk of low vitamin D if their mother has low vitamin D and/or if they have dark skin.
- **Children with conditions affecting how the body absorbs and controls vitamin D, such as liver disease, kidney disease, problems absorbing food (e.g. cystic fibrosis, coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease) and some medicines (such as some epilepsy medicines).**

Vitamin D treatment

Vitamin D tablets or mixtures can be low dose (taken daily) or high dose (taken monthly or less often). Tell your GP if your child is taking any vitamin D tablets/medicines, as too much vitamin D can also cause problems. It is important to know that there are lots of different types of vitamin D tablets and mixtures, and some of them are very strong. It is always good to bring your child's medicine when you see the GP so they can check what your child is taking.

Low vitamin D is a long-term problem. Once low vitamin D is treated, the aim is to make sure vitamin D levels stay normal. If your child is at risk of low vitamin D, they may need may need lifelong supplements, and you need to make sure they spend enough time outside (see below).

Children with low vitamin D also need enough calcium in their diet. Aim to give them two to three serves of dairy each day (one serve of dairy is equal to one glass of milk, one tub of yoghurt or one slice of cheese). If your child has a dairy allergy, talk to your doctor or nutritionist about alternatives.

Sun exposure and vitamin D

For most people, low vitamin D can be prevented by spending time outside.

Most Australians with light skin get enough vitamin D through the sun during normal daily outside activities. Children with light skin are at risk of skin cancer and should always use sunscreen and recommended sun protection.

Most Australians with dark skin need a longer time in the sun to make enough vitamin D – up to six times as long as someone with light skin. The colour in their skin protects them against skin cancer, but they should still avoid sunburn. Children with dark skin do not usually need to wear sunscreen during the autumn, spring or winter; however, hats and sunglasses are still important.

Visit the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) or use the free [SunSmart app](#) to find out the UV levels each day. During warmer months, when the UV-index rises above 3, incidental sun exposure (the exposure your child gets by being outside as part of their usual daily life) is often enough to maintain adequate vitamin D levels.

It is safe to be outside without sun protection in the morning and late afternoon when the UV-index falls beneath 3 (unless at high altitude or near reflective surfaces, like snow). During times with low UV-index, children should spend time outdoors with areas of their skin uncovered.

Key points to remember

- Vitamin D is important for bone and muscle health.
- Most vitamin D is made in the skin when it is exposed to the sun. It is hard to get enough vitamin D from food alone.
- Children with very dark skin, whose skin is rarely exposed to the sun or who have certain medical conditions are at risk of low vitamin D.
- Children with low vitamin D need to take vitamin D supplements, spend enough time outside, and need to get enough calcium in their diet.
- Too much vitamin D can also cause problems.



Healthy lunch-boxes for children

Healthy lunches and snacks are important for active children and help with concentration and learning.

Healthy eating changes are not always easy to make. Try to set a good example with your lunches and snacks. Encourage children to be involved in their own lunch/snack preparation, and their choices about what foods to include. Praise your child when they choose well.

Things to put in a lunch/snack box

- Fresh fruit (*fruit salad*)
- Try vegetable sticks with dips. Or a small container with mixed vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, peas, cucumber.
- A meat or protein food - slice of lean meat, hard boiled egg.
- Starchy food - bread, roll, pita or flat bread, fruit bread or crackers
- Fruit yogurts should be kept in an insulated lunchbox.
- Pre-packaged or your own home made versions of cheese and crackers are fine. Children enjoy mini packaged cheeses.
- To drink - water only

Best Left Out:

- Dried fruit bars and “straps” are very high in sugar, low in fibre and stick to children’s teeth causing tooth decay.
- Chips and packets of crisps are best left for parties and special occasions.
- Avoid sweet dips such as chocolate spreads. “Oven-baked” savoury biscuits are just as high in salt and fat as chips and should be avoided.

Pack your child a HEALTHY LUNCH BOX

Choose a variety of foods from each food group



Should I be teaching my preschooler literacy and numeracy before they go to school?

The following article is from Kathy Walker, she is a well respected and recognized educational consultant specializing in early childhood and primary years.

"The issue of early literacy and numeracy is frequently raised. People make comments such as, "the earlier you start learning, the better the learner you will be". Often advertisements for "early reading" claim that reading early gives children a "head start".

Certainly it is important for young preschoolers and toddlers to be exposed to and be able to participate in a range of what we define as early literacy and numeracy.

However, it is important to understand that how we define literacy and numeracy in these early years is much broader and richer than the narrow view of reading, writing and counting.

Opportunities for literacy and numeracy are everywhere. Many parents often joke about driving past McDonald's and having their two-year old recognize the golden arches. This is being literate - recognizing that signs symbolize meaning, particularly if motivated.

Literacy and numeracy is about recognizing, reasoning, speaking, listening, creating, thinking, analyzing and being able to recognize meaning in other things. When a child is making a cake out of sand from the sand pit, when a child acts out being a mum or dad in the home corner of a preschool, while pasting and creating - all of these actions represent elements of literacy and numeracy.

We don't need or want children to be drilled on the alphabet at the age of two or three. We don't need them to be tracing around numbers or letters or completing worksheets before they go to school. In fact some evidence suggests that this turns children off literacy and numeracy and disengages them before they even get to school.

What we actually want is for children to be given lots of opportunities to explore, to experiment and to have fun with language, shapes and colors.

Let's take the pasting table as an example. After negotiating their space around the table next to others, the child then starts to make a series of decisions about their pasting. The child's thinking, as often observed by early childhood staff through the self talk that children sometimes use, goes something like this: "I think I'll start with the big box over there, I want a little one on top for the chimney", or "I want a round one for the wheel, I will put one on the side and underneath".

As the child pulls out meters of masking tape, you often hear, "It's not long enough, I need more."

You can hear the rich language practice and the demonstration of literacy and numeracy as the child talks about concepts including the shape of the wheel, the length of masking tape, the position of the chimney, the size of the box etc.

At home, promoting rich opportunities for early literacy and numeracy can become part of everyday life. For example, creating something in the backyard from a cardboard box, perhaps a car that might need a registration plate, might be painted a particular color or represent a particular size. Painting and drawing, scribbling, and experimenting with different art forms are all part of helping children experience what it means to represent something at a different medium.

Sitting together during a meal, chatting about the day, making up nonsense rhymes with children so they experiment and have fun with language are all part of developing literacy skills. Modelling reading in front of your children and telling them stories and reading to them from a young age is also helpful. Sometimes books with repetitive text, so the children can start to remember and predict what comes next, help them to learn about sequence.

Children in these years learn through play and experiences in everyday life: looking at the numbers on letterboxes, the shapes and design of cars as you walk down the street, the size of the block building or the shape you made with the blocks.

Use positional language as they play in the backyard or park, such as "over", "across" the monkey bars, "under" the bridge, "up" the tree, "beside" the tree or "through" the tunnel. Using our own language as a model for children's early literacy and numeracy is one of the most powerful tools for understanding later on.

There is very little evidence that suggests that promoting the formal learning of letters and numbers in toddler or preschool years produces greater levels of understanding, more successful learners of the future or happier children.

Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and develops over a lifetime. It involves analysis, creative thinking and meaning.

Providing lots of these opportunities at home is the most important way to help prepare children to become literate and numerate.

MaryAnn's Worm Farm

Hello!!!

I am William the Wobbly Worm, head of the Stables Worm Farm.

Just letting you know that my worm friends and I are looking forward to meeting the new children and saying a big hello to the children who helped MaryAnn look after us last year.

We have miss the Stables Kindergarten children and are eagerly waiting to see you all again.

We are currently enjoying the following summer food scraps:

Watermelon, rock melon, honey-dew, strawberries, lettuce, spinach leaves, cucumber, zucchini, potato, carrot, celery, green beans, kiwi fruit, egg shells, used tea bags, peaches, nectarines and grapes.

And of course, looking forward to all the vegetable scraps the children will give us after their snack time and lunch time.



Love William the Wobbly Worm and MaryAnn

Our Website

Our website offers many benefits and features that can assist you. The website holds:

- Enrolment Information
- Community Information
- Fees and Sessions
- News and Events
- Kindergarten Surveys
- Newsletters
- Diary Dates
- Working Bee Dates
- Committee of Management meeting
- Parent Surveys

www.stableskindergarten.vic.edu.au



Term Newsletter

At the beginning of term 2, 3, and 4 a comprehensive newsletter will be available on the website and Kindergarten App, please take the time to read it as it will contain important information regarding all aspects of the service and also events that will be taking place in that term.

If you do not have access to the internet, please see Nadia for a hardcopy.

Group Representatives

We would like to thank the parents that have put their hand up to help in this role in the Red, Green and Blues Groups.

We still require two parents to help out in Yellow Groups.

This role will be an informal one where you will provide families with the opportunity to connect with other parents in their group leading to strong relationships being formed that can transcend through to primary school and beyond.

You may like to organise a social catch up, inviting **all** the parents from your group, to possibly a playcentre, coffee shop, lunch etc...once a term.

The organisation required here will not be that needed to organise a wedding, it can be a simple note in the children's communication pockets extending the invitation to all the families.

If you would like to discuss the role further, please do not hesitate to see Angela Buccella.

Policies to be reviewed

The following policies will be reviewed this term:

- Child Safe Environment
- Diabetes
- Prevention and Harassment and Bullying
- Road Safety and Safe Transport

If you are able to help review/provide feedback on these policies we would welcome your input.

A new day dawned.....

In 2010 the Committee of Management approached the Principal of St Francis of Assisi Primary School with a proposal for a merger, or alternatively the school taking over management control of the kindergarten.

There were many reasons for this at the time, but the primary one was to ensure that the kindergarten had ongoing managerial stability and not be subject to the hiccups that occur at end of year when the outgoing committee handover to the newly elected committee.

Parents over the years have done exceptional work in their positions on kindergarten committee's, but times are changing. Parents are finding it difficult to commit the time (in a voluntary capacity) necessary to run a kindergarten, and it has also become so heavily regulated that many parents coming on for a one year term are unaware of what is required, and certainly what is involved to do the job.

This started a process which went over many months and all the "nitty gritty" was fleshed out.

The school principal and Father Anthony Girolami felt that in the spirit of community, they would take on this responsibility.

It was decided that St. Francis of Assisi Primary School would hold management control of the kindergarten appointing 6 school officers in ongoing positions on the committee of management.

To assist with the process and to ensure the success of such a venture, the committee (2010), Principal and Father Anthony, decided that to support the committee of management, the appointment of a manager was necessary. This appointment has ensured that all criteria set out by government at a local, state and federal level are met and funding requirements are adhered to year after year, and without interruption.

By purpose of the above introduction allow me to introduce myself, my name is Nadia Totham. My background is primarily Business Management/Human Resources and in the past 11 years I have worked in kindergarten environments, so I have a fair idea of how they operate and more importantly at what standard a kindergarten must function in order to provide the best possible experience for our children and their families. I will be based at the kindergarten Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Below are a couple of myths that have circulated in the past, so for the purpose of clarity let me assure you that:

- the kindergarten remains an incorporated association, therefore, it has not been purchased by St. Francis of Assisi Primary School.
- All funds remain assets of the kindergarten, for sole use by the kindergarten.

St Francis of Assisi Primary School also offers us support in allowing us to use their state of the art facilities, I.T, and dealing with government at a state and local level, this commitment only serves to strengthen our kindergarten.

I also have an open door policy and welcome any feedback at any time.

I look forward to working with you and also our very talented and dedicated team who I know will cherish working with your children.

Kindest Regards

Nadia Totham

