

## Collaboration

In this year of Covid 19, of lockdowns, of staying home and of isolation, working together with others has never been more important.

As adults, we have created new ways to keep in touch, we have mastered the art of Zoom meetings, and making sure we are not on mute. We have shared our google docs, used One Note and transferred large files on Dropbox... but how has this looked for our youngest citizens in this unprecedented year? And what can we do to minimise the impact on the future lives of our Preschool children?

It is a well-documented fact that most parents enrol their children in a Preschool to ensure that they learn to live in a democracy, that is, to learn to share, to debate ideas, to get along with others and to learn how to ensure their voice is heard. Collaboration with others is a critical part of all of our lives in this 21st century, with the ability to work as a team being a universal requirement for any career or sporting or musical achievement.

With the isolation that has been placed upon us this year, we felt as a teaching team that a focus on collaboration was important for our children, as they returned to the normality of life with their friends at Preschool. Moving from working and playing alongside their peers, to actually working together is a big step for children of this age,

but is vitally important as they move towards being able to negotiate with others, solve problems creatively and learn to advocate for their own thoughts and beliefs.

Understanding that others may have a different perspective or point of view to your own, and the ability to take the time to listen to those ideas is also important for a growth mindset, and the further development of innovative ideas.

Our children have this year embraced the concept of drawing their ideas as a way of investigating how the world works. The challenges put to them have included anything from how to draw a train and the noises coming from it, to understanding the process of creating, or what does kindness look like. For many of our children at Preschool, drawing on the same piece of paper as one of their friends was a challenging

concept, and they were initially careful to keep to their own space and ensure that their images didn't cross over. But the change has been swift as the teachers have carefully encouraged the children to work in pairs to deepen their understanding of concepts, debate their ideas and further develop their theories of how the world works.

Patrick Lencioni talks about the 5 most important traits of a team, and whilst these are aimed at adults, the 3 he deemed most important are certainly also relevant to Preschool aged children and it is important to ensure that we support our children in starting their journey to refine these skills.

- The most important trait is trust. Through understanding the value of kindness and ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, children develop the confidence to verbalise their ideas without fear of being ridiculed, and with the knowledge that their thoughts are valued as much as anyone else's.
- The second most important trait is the ability to debate ideas. Knowing how to think critically, ask relevant questions to clarify another person's thoughts, and to analyse how these new ideas may fit into your own are important skills at any age, and by enabling this at such a young age, we are setting our children to be true global citizens.
- The third trait Lencioni discusses is commitment. As our children work towards a common goal throughout their projects, the teachers challenge them to ensure they are all satisfied with the outcome, encouraging them to expand their thinking along the way.

As adults it is important that we continue to role model collaboration with our children in our day to day routine. Spend time working together with both your children and the other adults in your lives to inspire collaboration as a part of everyday life:

- Let your children hear your discussions about what colour to paint the house, or which seeds to plant in your garden
- Allow your children to join you as you paint the fence or wash the car
- Shop together with your children and ask for their input as you buy gifts for loved ones over the Christmas Season
- Cook with your children
- Draw together with your children, creating a joint piece of art
- Engage in conversation at the dinner table with your children

I hope you are all enjoying a wonderful summer, spending time with your loved ones and collaborating over summer barbecues, at a time when so many throughout the world are unable to be together.

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**Nikki Joyce**  
Preschool Principal



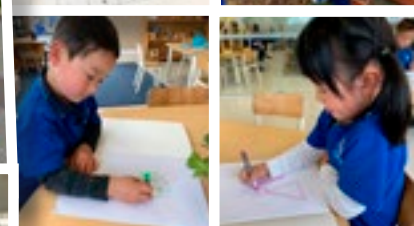
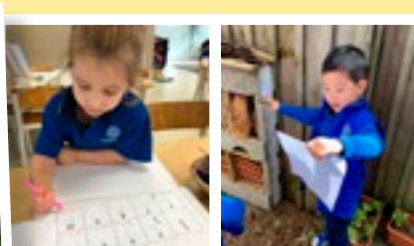
# Transition to School

At Preschool, our children's early learning journey is ongoing from the moment they start, and eventually becoming a 'transition' boy or girl is a milestone that our four-year-old children look forward to. They carry this mantle of achievement with pride and enthusiasm!

We place value on fostering a love of learning for life and have a responsibility to prepare our preschoolers for the next step of their learning journey on to primary school. Our 'transition' children meet for carefully planned, small group learning experiences that foster a variety of skills and dispositions. They are given tasks to complete that require them to use their developing fine motor skills, while reinforcing fundamental knowledge such as letter symbols, phonics and to count and practise writing numerals.

Whilst knowledge and skill acquisition are paramount to a successful transition, it is also important to nurture the holistic potential of the children. This means that we endeavour to foster independence, taking responsibility for their emotions and belongings and to have a positive attitude fuelled by high self-esteem. These small group experiences are a special time with a teacher where children are encouraged to collaborate, listen to others, to persist with seeing a task through to completion and to make their own decisions.

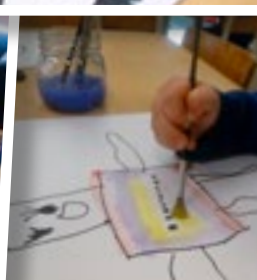
Our transition children also enjoy frequent visits to either the Boys' School or Girls' School, where the children get to meet their new teacher, meet up with old Preschool friends and experience school-related activities. Children who possess effective social skills and communication strategies are very well placed to be an active participant in their own ongoing learning journey.



# The Process of Creating

Our investigation into the 'Processes of Creating' has transcended many areas of the Preschool environment with the children offered intentional learning experiences that utilise a wide variety of resources and a range of expressive languages. It is through process-driven research that children have opportunities to explore their interests, strengths and abilities, along with building 'working understandings' of how to make their developing knowledge more visible to others. In small groups, children have embarked on activities underpinned by learning outcomes that value collaboration, creativity and problem-solving.

We have been truly impressed by the children's passion, curiosity and prior knowledge; these attributes support the children to construct their own working theories. The children have learnt so much about their own capability, as well as understanding that everyday play experiences are opportunities to become competent and collaborative learners.







## Kindness

Stories are used by teachers to provoke the children to think more deeply about concepts as well as to foster their literacy and communication skills. 'Kindness Grows' by Brittan Teckentrup is a popular story that we used to delve into kindness. This story aligns so well with many of our Saint Kentigern values, especially the values of Love and Respect. As a teaching team, we took opportunities to explore these values alongside the children in ways that nurture dispositions such as empathy and demonstrating care for themselves and others.

After listening to this story and sharing our thoughts and ideas around what it means to be kind, some of our children were invited to create a collaborative piece of art. Interwoven in the piece was their own individual interpretations of what kindness means to them. Working collaboratively in a visual way offers children the time and space to share their thoughts and ideas and to make their developing knowledge visible. We always endeavour to ask the children to share their ideas that we then document to complement their finished art piece. The selection included below highlights the children's capabilities to express their own thoughts using descriptive language and metaphor.

*'Kindness is giving people flowers'*

*'Kindness is listening to our teachers and friends'*

*'Kindness is hugs'*

*'Kindness is holding hands and giving them a Kowhai flower'*

*'Kindness is lots of hearts because we love everybody at Preschool'*



## Celebrating Diwali

Valuing our rich multicultural context is very important to us at Preschool. With this in mind, we celebrated Diwali under the expert tutelage of two of our colleagues. They both planned a variety of learning experiences to broaden our understandings of this cultural festival that is celebrated across India with various symbolic and spiritual gestures.

The children loved the opportunity to dress up in richly coloured Indian clothing; choices ranged from beautiful dresses to dapper coats. These were proudly worn and danced in, to the lilting Bollywood music playing gently in the background. One of the teachers read a book about Diwali to the children introducing them all to the many beautiful aspects of this widely celebrated festival and teaching us relevant words and phrases in Hindi. The children also enjoyed the experience of making 'Rangoli' (Indian patterns), after watching their teachers intricately and carefully demonstrate the design for them to follow. In addition to our delicious curry at lunch time, we were treated to some delicious home cooked rotis (flat bread)- what a wonderfully tasty addition to an already nutritious meal. Teachers and children alike greatly enjoyed learning about new cultural rituals and traditions. This new knowledge enriched our understandings of a culture different to our own and presented an opportunity for us to appreciate diversity within our Preschool community.



## Cross Country and Tabloid Sports

The cross-country racing was superb as the boys and girls ran their separate races ably supported by our teachers and helpers from the College. It was lovely to see the Junior School boys come out to cheer us on too. Congratulations to our fastest sprinters; their determination to finish first stood out a mile.

After morning tea, it was time for tabloid sports. The children had so much fun working on their gross motor skills with their proud parents looking on in support. This busy morning gives all of our children the opportunity to experience a 'sports' day where participation and trying our best are the order of the day.





# Snow Day

Snow Day is always a popular annual event on the Preschool calendar. This year was no exception. The warmer November weather enticed children, their families and teachers to explore the icy cold snow that had been delivered earlier that morning. The variety of bright snow gear and waterproof clothing made a colourful sight against the snow!

Our seasoned snow explorers confidently traipsed through the snow to lay down and make snow angels, and playfully sprinkle each other with flakes of snow. The children come up with the ingenious idea of using our buckets and spades, usually reserved for the sand, to make 'snow castles.' For the more hesitant, we had teachers on hand to encourage and support them to touch and engage with this chilly wonderland of white.

This event was hugely popular with our parents and younger siblings too. It presented an opportunity for our families to spend quality time together at Preschool. It was heart-warming to see our Preschool children show kindness and care to our youngest guests, ensuring that they were included in the fun.



# Christmas Concert

As the Preschool year came to an end, our preschoolers put on their Santa hats and made their way to the Girls' School Hall for their annual Christmas Concert. Always a highlight on the calendar, parents and invited guests quickly filled the hall to watch the children perform. The preschoolers spent the last term learning the actions and words to nine of their favourite songs and took turns performing at the front of the stage - faces lit up as each of the children spotted their loved ones in the audience!

The youngsters put on a fantastic show, before heading back to the Preschool to enjoy some refreshments - and say hello to a very special guest - Santa!

