



## Learning Through Play...

Learning for children happens every day in many ways, with each day full of learning opportunities for our preschoolers. As they play, they are learning in a fun-filled, stimulating environment, preparing themselves developmentally for all future learnings.

For some parents, 'play' has attracted a negative 'time wasting' connotation but in reality, play is a vital part of every child's development. It allows them to test ideas, work through uncertainties, explore social interactions and make sense of the world around them. Quality play is not about the end product but about the process - and the exploration of ideas is crucial. Te Whariki - ECE Curriculum supports play as an integral part of a child's learning journey as they gain confidence, competence, curiosity, and a sense of responsibility and belonging as they learn and grow.

When children play with blocks, lego and all forms of construction resources - they are learning about shapes, balance, design and how things work together, developing problem-solving techniques, creating 3-dimensional structures and maths concepts of height, weight, size, space and depth - all needed should they become an architect, builder or a designer.

Baking and cooking, manipulating playdough and clay using fine motor control, having social interactions with friends, turn taking, acting out real life situations, taking on roles, creating new rules and experiences are all skills needed for life in the wider world.

Playing on a digger in the sand or gravel pit, learning about how mechanisms move, working in a team, digging with spades / buckets, trucks and bulldozers all encourage hand-eye coordination and large muscle development. Making sand castles, adding water to

construct waterways and tunnels, all support the work of an engineer, plumber or construction worker.

When sitting to read to themselves or with friends, using imagination and expression, playing maths and language games, learning phonics /alphabet and numbers through pre-literacy and pre-numeracy, they learn about co-operating with others. Children gain skills needed for reading and achieving at school, to then go on to be future university students or take on a role in the workplace.

Singing at mat times, using puppets, speaking in front of others, performing and dancing encourages children to express themselves in an accepting environment of fun, where socio-emotional learning is integrated with academic learning. Who knows, they may be a broadcaster, musician, actor or politician in the making. Dramatic play, dressing up and interacting with teachers and friends helps with social skills, communication and the ability to build emotional qualities to be a positive citizen of the future.

As children play outside, running, skipping, hopping and doing yoga, fitness, balance bikes, balls and hoops, they learn about how their body works, taking risks, being active and healthy, developing skills to be a future doctor, nurse or athlete.

Hunting for bugs, researching about creatures, having pets and animals at Preschool, making volcanos in the sandpit and IT research, all teach children about the appreciation for living things and encourage their scientific and technological investigation.

As children, their work is play and is a simple joy to be cherished through childhood. At Preschool as they learn through actions, the importance of balancing play with routines and structure is possible with qualified, experienced and passionate staff giving the children the support and love they need.

This great start is the ultimate opportunity in education that you can give your child as they begin their learning journey at Saint Kentigern.

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**Mrs Sue Nash**  
Preschool Director

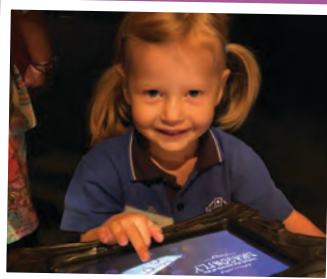






## Science is All Around Us

Whether it is mixing primary colours to make secondary colours, exploring bugs with magnifying glasses, and then searching for more under logs outside, playing with coloured ice cubes that melt to form a mass of colour or watching a scientist come to show us experiments of bubbles exploding into flames and smoke rings floating above our heads. Or whether it is chasing bubbles outside that reflect prisms of colours and then pop, or planting in our garden and then harvesting and eating the produce – potatoes, celery, lettuce, beans and tomatoes. Or maybe tasting honeycomb from a child's beehive to reinforce our interest in bees, then making afternoon tea using measurements, mixing, blending and baking techniques before watching the food cook and rise in the oven. Or even learning about weather patterns and making kites to blow on the windy day. Science is all around us and we ensure our preschoolers are immersed in opportunities to recognise this every day.



## Bug Lab

Exploring and investigating about bugs happens regularly at Preschool – whether it's searching outside under logs, catching crickets for our gecko, drawing and constructing bugs in art or researching about them on our interactive screen – it's all in a day's work.

With the arrival of Weta Workshop's BUG LAB at Auckland Zoo, our children headed there for the morning to extend their learning in a new environment. Being greeted by a massive praying mantis, huge honeybees, a 3D cockroach and jewel wasps was an awesome start to introduce our children to the wonderful world of bug life. They were able to make paper butterflies to float up in a wind tunnel, look through glass cabinets to view large dragonflies and other flying insects, research on Ipads, draw bugs for the wall, slide down a large bug slide as well as watch videos of bugs in the living world. The artwork, discussions and learning continued back at preschool as our sleep area was turned into our very own LAB of BUGS!

## Engineers at Work

Exploration in the sandpit changes each day – wooden diggers, buckets and spades, a café with cooking utensils, funnels and sieves or adding water. A tap and hose attached to the side of the sandpit helps to change the learning focus. The children watched as the water made 'tracks' in the sand before their engineering brains went to work – digging channels of different depths and widths. The collaboration and team work in the sandpit took on a new level – with the skills of negotiation, turn taking, sharing resources and control of the water speed – lots of amazing communication and new vocabulary was heard. The discoveries by our engineers continued once the water was turned off – as they created more 'pathways' – before the water was turned on again and WOW the anticipation as it ran through their water ways. What great learning again in our huge sandpit!







## Learning to Care

The arrival of two miniature kunekune piglets - called Elvis (due to his constant noise) and Parker (after boxer Joseph Parker) at the tender age of 20 days has brought much enjoyment for the children - although not so much for Sue with the need to take them home each night for two hourly bottle feeding! However, the nightly vigil was worth it to see the amazing learning in language, art, social interactions, empathy and care that the children are showing. The piglets have also had lots of visits from the Girls' School classes. The piglets will stay with until they get too big, before going to live on the lifestyle block in Kumeu with our Preschool chickens and pet lamb!



## Freckles the Leopard Gecko

Freckles the aptly named leopard gecko arrived to much excitement. She had been especially hand reared by Brian from Hands on Learning (who came to visit us last year with his spiders and creepy crawlies) so she was ready to be held by the children. The children have daily 'cuddles' and love it when she crawls up their arms and goes to sleep on their shoulder. They happily go on the search for live crickets. As she is a very fussy eater, her food has to be alive and moving for her to eat!

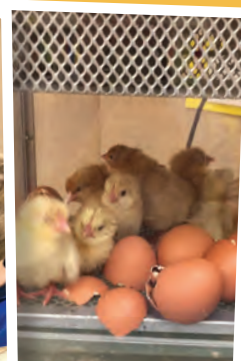
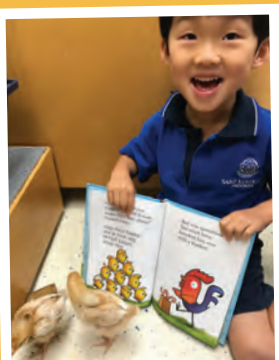


## Hatching New Life

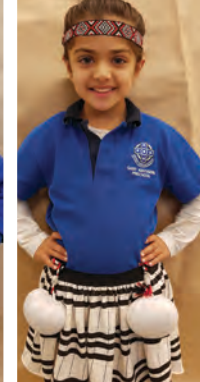
10 fertilised eggs arrived in an incubator and within three days they had hatched into the cutest yellow chicks! The facial expressions on the preschoolers was priceless as they watched the egg start to 'pip,' then a very 'gooey-looking' chick hatch out to become fluffy within half an hour.

Parents and visiting adults were totally smitten in the process, most having never witnessed a 'live hatching' before. Each chick was 'colour coded' and named for identification, 'Latte, Perky Nana and Moonbar' to name a few!

After two weeks of living at Preschool under the heat lamp, having books read to them and lots of cuddles, some children went for a drive to Kumeu to take the friendliest chicks ever to Sue's parents lifestyle block - where they are living the life of free range luxury!







## A Focus on Te Reo

All cultures are affirmed and responded to within Preschool and New Zealand's bicultural practice is meaningfully integrated and highly evident in our learning environment. As teachers, we acknowledge the place of Maori in Aotearoa and focus on ensuring Maori culture is embedded in our daily programme through te reo, tikanga Maori, music and dance, art – always presenting opportunities for our children to be engaged. A focus on the book 'Pukunui' saw the children becoming engrossed and even more passionate about all things Maoritanga. As a result, our children now initiate the use of te reo Maori with their peers and teachers, and really enjoyed the chance to dress up to sing and dance.



## We Will Remember Them

The importance of ensuring our younger generation understand and appreciate what ANZAC Day means for NZ is why we include it as a focus at Preschool. From reading stories like their favourites 'Simpson and the Donkey' and 'Caesar the Anzac Dog' to creating amazing artwork, dressing as soldiers, having our own army barracks and watching snippets about soldiers on our Interactive screen were all part of the learning. A highlight was seeing some real war medals brought in by Enzo – who was so proud to show us his maternal Great Grandfather's medals from 1914. It is so important to ensure this appreciation continues.



## Commonwealth Champion Visits!

After watching our NZ athletes compete at the Commonwealth Games in Australia, the children were thrilled to welcome a champion medal winner to Preschool. Kelsey Smith, a gold medallist as part of the NZ Women's Hockey team, came to show the children her medal. Sue had briefed the children on the hockey women's successes and it was amazing to hear their questions, especially 'Were you scared when you had to do the penalty shoot-out with England in the semi-final?' Kelsey replied, 'We were all very nervous but when our captain scored the winning goal – we all cried with happy tears.'

Kelsey now has a new fan club ready to support her and the team at the World Cup in England in July!

