

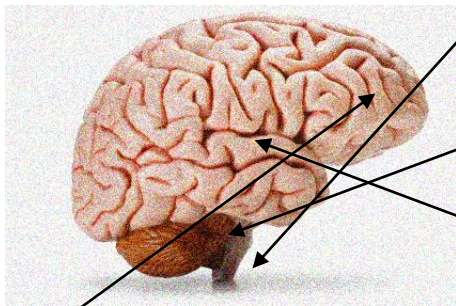
From the Head of ELC – Kathleen Brohier

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2021. We aim for a newsletter to go out each month to update and inform you all. Our newsletters are useful in sharing important reminders, highlights from the children's programs and resourceful information. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to know more about, and our educators will be happy to share.

The staff and children have settled into their routines and programs. Thank you to those who viewed our parent information videos. If you have any further questions about the children's day and what to expect, please speak to your teacher. This year we look forward to working in partnership with our parent community – the children's first and vital educators to ensure the children develop in all areas as they find a sense of belonging and being in their early learning environment.

When we have an understanding of child development, we are better able to ensure that our expectations are appropriate in terms of: brain development, child development and social and emotional development.

Brain Development ~ the brain develops in a logical order – from bottom to top (or 1-4 in the picture below).



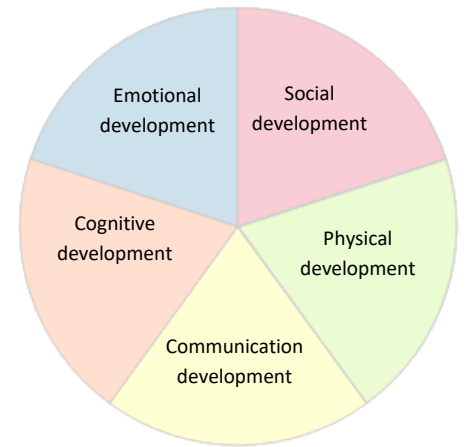
1. The **brainstem** is responsible for regulating automatic functions, such as heart rate and body temperature. This is fully developed at birth to allow for survival.
2. The **midbrain** is responsible for regulating sleep and appetite. This part of the brain develops in the first 12 months.
3. The **limbic system** is the centre for emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, happiness. This part of the brain becomes very active around the age of 2.
4. The **frontal lobe** is the thinking part of the brain. It is responsible for planning and problem solving. This part of the brain develops between 3 and 7, when connections start forming between the frontal lobe and limbic system. These connections are influenced by the environment – the more the brain is activated, the stronger it becomes.

So, if the frontal lobe is the logical, thinking part of the brain and its connections to the other parts of the brain are not fully complete until around the age of 7, perhaps this explains why it is not until then that we start seeing more consistent behaviour and self-regulation from children. We need to carefully consider the expectations we have of the children, and ask ourselves if they are appropriate.

Child development ~ all areas of child development are interconnected. It is impossible to focus on one area without impacting on other areas in some way. Learning that occurs in one area of development will influence learning in another area of development. A child who is experiencing language difficulties will also likely experience some behavioural issues in relation to social and emotional development as they are likely to have difficulties expressing their needs. Learning difficulties or delays in reaching developmental milestones can occur in all children in a variety of ways, for a variety of reasons.

Social and emotional development ~ children are not born equipped with the social and emotional skills needed to regulate how they interact with others. They are born completely dependent on the adults around them to provide support, model appropriate behaviours and gently guide them when needed. In order to adjust our level of support

and expectations for children's behaviour appropriately, we need to have a deeper understanding of their developmental capabilities. Ongoing support will enable children to develop what we call 'social competence', which is the ability to interact with others in an appropriate way. Social development refers to a child's ability to interact, relate to and empathise with others. Some typical milestones for 3-5 year olds include:



- Enjoys playing with other children
- May have a particular friend
- Shares, smiles and begins to cooperate with peers (cooperative play)
- Jointly manipulates objects with one or two other peers
- Develops independence and social awareness

Emotional development refers specifically to our feelings – about us, about others and about the world. Some typical emotional milestones include:

- Understands when someone is hurt and comforts them
- May enforce gender role norms with peers
- May show bouts of aggression with peers
- Likes to give and receive affection from parents
- May praise themselves and be boastful

There is an obvious range of behaviours that children exhibit in relation to emotional development, and these will change throughout childhood. There are times when children will make independent choices and other times when they will seek out adult support to assist them. This can relate to a child experiencing difficulties and trauma, or simply a reaction to the immediate circumstances. *What is emotional development?*

- Increasing ability to control responses to situations
- Understanding your own emotions and the emotions of those around you
- Developing bonds and attachments
- Developing empathy
- Sense of self
- Self-esteem

All behaviours are an attempt to communicate something. In order to adequately support children and guide their behaviour in a safe and supportive way we must be aware of factors that affect behaviour. Working in partnership, as educator and parents, the children are able to hear a common language and experience clear expectations.

Please make sure you have passed on your Working With Children Check details so you can participate in the program with the children and educators this year. If you have a special talent, interest or the gift of time that you would like to share, please speak to your child's teacher. We welcome all our parents and friends in to further enhance the children's learning opportunities.

“The cornerstone of our experience, based on practice, theory and research, is the image of the children as rich, strong and powerful. The emphasis is placed on seeing the children as unique subjects with rights rather than simply needs. They have potential, plasticity, the desire to grow, curiosity, the ability to be amazed, and the desire to relate to other people and to communicate.”

Carlina Rinaldi, 2001

As the children in early learning environments play, and take on roles of those within their community, they are learning. Learning to feel confident in their choices, confident in who they are, what they say and how they act. The early childhood educator is guiding the behaviour of each child within their group, not by talking on their behalf, but by assisting them to use their own voice, to feel heard.

Using a combination of structured learning programs, incidental conversations as moments arise and the understandings of the key theorists that first brought the importance of this age group to mind, early childhood professionals play a key role in ensuring that the young people of today, become the confident, accepting adults of tomorrow.

Dates for your Diary ~ further dates are added throughout the year. Please update your calendars as required.

March

Tuesday 2nd – SKC Buddies 5A – Pre Prep

Monday 8th – **ELC CLOSED** – Labour Day Public Holiday

Wednesday 10th – SKC Buddies 5B – Pre Prep

Monday 15th – Body Safety Australia – Parent Workshop (6.30-8.30pm) ~ *Information letter below. Refreshments will be available from 6pm.*

Tuesday 16th – Children’s Program (3yo group: 10am - 10.45am & 4yo group: 11am - 11.45am)

Wednesday 17th – SKC Buddies 5C – Kinder

Tuesday 23rd – Children’s Program (3yo group: 10am - 10.45am & 4yo group: 11am - 11.45am)

Friday 26th – Welcome Blessing & Liturgy 2.00pm – ELC Playground

April

Thursday 1st – End Term 1 (**no aftercare**)

Friday 2nd – Good Friday Public Holiday

Term 2

Monday 19th – Staff return

Tuesday 20th – **ELC Commence Term 2 – Children return**

May

Sunday 2nd – St Peter’s ELC Open Morning 11.00 -1.00pm (*SKC Open Day 1.00-4.00pm*)

Monday 10th – 8.30-9.30am Mother’s Day Morning

Monday 17th – Boori Monty Pryor – Aboriginal Storyteller

Tuesday 18th – 1.00 - 8.00pm Parent/Teacher Exchanges (ELC children finish at 12.00noon)

Wednesday 19th – SKC Buddies 5A – Pre Prep

Tuesday 25th – SKC Buddies 5B – Pre Prep

June

Wednesday 2nd – SKC Buddies 5C – Kinder

Friday 4th – ELC CLOSED – Staff Professional Development Day

Monday 14th – **ELC CLOSED** – Queen’s Birthday Public Holiday

Friday 18th – End Term 2 (**no aftercare**)



Dear parents and caregivers,

St Peter's Early Learning Centre has engaged Body Safety Australia to deliver their Body Safety Superstars! program to our community.

Body Safety Australia will be running a 2hr parent/carer workshop session on:

Monday 15 March 2021 from 6.30pm to 8.30pm

The workshop is interactive and will cover the following topics:

- Outline of the children's program including learning objectives
- What is Body Safety and how can we support it at home?
- Identifying grooming behaviours on and offline
- Child sexual abuse: risks, myths and facts
- Q & A forum with our educator



All parents, carers and educators are encouraged to attend, however please note that the workshop is not appropriate for children.

There will also be age-appropriate books available for purchase that support body safety education.

You can find out more about Body Safety Australia at www.bodysafetyaustralia.com.au

We look forward to seeing you there!



Body Safety Australia Team

Email: info@bodysafetyaustralia.com.au | Phone: 98636766

Sun Safety

St Peter's ELC is a sun smart centre, and we thank you for applying sunscreen to the children as part of your drop off routine. Please ensure the children always have their hat – no hat, no play. If the children do not have a hat, they will need to play in shaded areas. We will reapply sunscreen to the children throughout the day. To keep the children hydrated, please ensure the children come each day with a drink bottle.

To keep with our SunSmart attitude, please ensure the children wear appropriate clothing, keeping shoulders and backs covered.

Working With Children Check

Get yourself a Working with Children Check if you don't already have one!

This can be done simply through the link - <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply> or at your local Post Office.

There is no fee to this check, and it lasts for five years. Please make sure you have pass on your Working With Children Check details so you can participate in the program with the children and educators this year. If you have a special talent, interest or the gift of time that you would like to share, please speak to your child's teacher. We welcome all our parents and friends in to further enhance the children's learning opportunities.

This allows you to join us for any excursions and/or incursions held throughout the year. We love to have you a part of our program.

Parent and Friends (P&F) Committee 2021

Thank you to those who have already volunteered by putting their hand up to be a part of our P&F Committee.

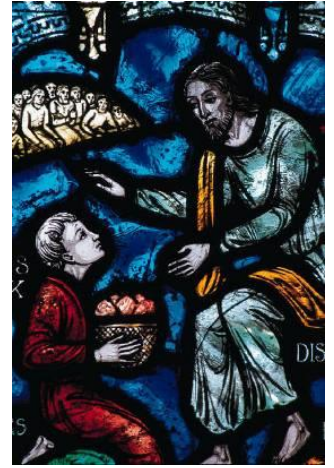
I understand how busy everyone is, and taking on a role like this can be difficult at times to juggle with work, family, other school obligations and day to day run arounds. We truly do appreciate you volunteering to assist and continue the tradition of our parent reps within the ELC to bring our community together. As they say, many hands make light work!

This year our committee will be a 'working party' to assist with the various events/functions throughout the year. This allows everyone the opportunity to put their hand up when they can and step aside if needed – to hopefully have everything come together. Our Kinder reps are Sam (Anna Jane's mum) and Alicia (Alexander's mum). Our Pre Prep reps are Yan (Ryan's mum) and Tash (Asher's mum). Storypark will be used to broadcast events such as play dates with the children or nights out for the parents. WhatsApp will be used for easy communication amongst te groups.



Easter & Lent *A time of kindness, friendship and compassion*

As part of our religious focus we have been and will be discussing important aspects such as Lent and Holy Week with the children at a level appropriate to their understanding. During our daily prayer time, we have been reinforcing that Lent is a time of preparation leading up to Easter and the importance of helping others less fortunate by giving something of ourselves to assist others.



We would like the **children to choose something of their own from home** that they would like to give to someone else. They can **place this in a basket in their classroom**. Please note that this is not designed for the children to bring something new in; we hope that by asking the children to choose something of their own to give to another child they will truly be involved in the process of considering others. They need only **choose a small toy item or a book** that they are happy to give up. It is very important that the children actually make the choice of which item they will donate as opposed to parents choosing for them. We thank you for your support of the children's thinking and learning of compassion, respect, friendship, kindness and in thinking of others. We ask that **soft toys are not chosen**.

We are also asking **all children/families to donate an Easter Egg** to be passed on to other children less fortunate than us. **Eggs can be placed in a labelled basket in the piazza**.

We would be thrilled if donations could be made by **Friday 26th March**, as they will be handed on in our final week of term. This is to further support the children's understanding of their giving being passed on to others.

We plan to have our own Easter liturgy with the children during our final week of term, and will let you know of the date and time once confirmed. Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness.

Educational Program

Each room shares its educational intentions via the plan and program displayed outside the room. Documentation is shared through Storypark and displayed documentation in the rooms of different projects that the children are engaged in.

Whilst planning the program and following the principles of the Reggio Emilia Educational Project, we look at the individual and the group. Plans are formulated for skill development and reinforcement based on our observations and knowledge of the child's interests, needs and abilities. We build on the child's prior knowledge, strengths and challenge all areas of development. The program for both the Kinder and Pre Prep room is shared diagrammatically using Howard Gardner's domains of intelligence. The Specialist Program is shared with you in a grid format acknowledging the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework.

This poem helps to highlight some of the 'work' the children are doing throughout the day.

Just Playing

When I am building in the block room,
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play,
About balance and shapes.
Who knows, I may be an architect someday.
When I am getting all dressed up,
Setting the table, caring for the babies,
Don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm expressing myself and being creative.
I may be an artist or an inventor someday.
When you see me sitting in a chair
"Reading" to an imaginary audience,
Please don't laugh and think I'm "Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a teacher someday.
When you see me combing the bushes for bugs,
Or packing my pockets with choice things I find,
Don't pass it off as "Just Play."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I may be a scientist someday.
When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some
"plaything" at my school,
Please don't feel that time is wasted in "Play."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.
I may be in business some day.
When you see me cooking or tasting foods,
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "Just Play."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to follow directions and see differences.
I may be a cook someday.
When you see me learning to skip, hop, run, and move my body,
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning how my body works.
I may be a doctor, nurse, or athlete someday.
When you ask me what I've done at school today,
And I say, I "Just played."
Please don't misunderstand me.
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful at my work,
I'm preparing for tomorrow.
Today, I am a child and my work is play.

Anita Wadley

Kinder Program ~ Miss Natalie

The children have developed a strong sense of belonging in the Kinder room. They've been very open minded to trying different activities in our indoor and outdoor program, pushing themselves out of their comfort zones to get to know one another and become valued members of the Kinder group. In a short amount of time we have already witnessed beautiful connections, moments of joy and laughter and a sense of pride towards their achievements.

We look forward to observing further development and confidence in the children as we progress through the year.

Anna Jane "I love painting"

Alexander "I like to play with the buses"

Gordon "I love dinosaurs"

Walker "I also like to play dinosaurs and running and dancing and singing"

Anneliese "I love looking at the books"

William "I like playing dinosaurs and blue cars"

Brandon "I like playing at the swings"

Andre "I like playing buses and trains"

Amelia "I love painting as well"



Pre Prep Program ~ Miss Melissa

We have had a wonderful start to the year in Pre Prep and the children have adjusted beautifully, settling into their new environment and becoming familiar with the daily routines. It has been so lovely to see how the children have reconnected as a group, while also welcoming our new children this year. This Term, we look forward to learning more about the children as we explore identity, as well as exploring and developing the children's interests.

The children have shared some aspects of what they are enjoying about Pre Prep and their new learning environment.

Xara "Playing the swings"

Maya "Doing the new puzzles"

Archie "Playing Lego"

Gigi "I like that we have swings, we didn't have swings at the old school."

Adrian "I like drawing"



Specialist Program ~ Miss Anna

It has been a wonderful start to the Pre Prep Specialists Program, with the children eager to participate in Music and Drama, Creative Arts, Library and Busy Bodies at the beginning of their learning journey for 2021. The Pre Preps were eager to share their thoughts on Specialist Time so far with their peers:



Gigi I like it when you do drama with us. I like pretending to be a fish.

Louis I like it when you do Busy Bodies. I like the Bear one.

Lilly I like it when you do Busy Bodies too.

Eden I like the Bear Hunt.

Allegra I love reading books with you.

Isabella I like when we paint stuff.

Amelia I like Mr. Monkey.

Now the Kinder children are settled into their new environment and are developing strong relationships with their educators and peers, we are looking forward to exploring many of the children's fascinating interests in each area of Specialist Time.

In Busy Bodies/Physical Education, a broad range of activities are undertaken, whether that involves physical movements to songs or games. We are looking to involve them in each experience, making their participation enjoyable and building their confidence. One of the objectives is to develop the children's gross motor skills, which refers to the children's ability to receive, interpret and respond appropriately to sensory information.

The key focus in Library is to stimulate a love of literature in the children while also developing their comprehension. We ask the children questions about what has been read and also play games relating to the fiction or non-fiction books, assisting the children in their comprehension of the literature and involving them in the joy of reading.

As we all know, the children have lots of ideas which they love to express in different ways and Creative Arts focuses on allowing them to do that using a variety of materials. The children's artwork is often linked to what the children are currently exploring as the children love to express themselves through art. It is wonderful to see the children's joy and pride in displaying their artwork and building their confidence in this way.

The development of children's musical literacy as well as increasing the children's capacity to participate and also enjoy acting are critical objectives in Music and Drama. Over time, while continuing to ensure the programs are enjoyable, great progress is made by the children in these important areas. Music is considered to be a language of expression so we arrange for a variety of different musical experiences to take place. In Drama, we draw upon the children's imagination and there are ongoing opportunities for the children to act in different roles. Again, their participation not only builds their skills but also their confidence and self-esteem as well as experience in collaborating with their peers.

In the Specialist Program, we take up a number of projects based upon the Reggio Emilia philosophy. These projects are designed to draw upon the children's interests and imaginations. You're all welcome to contribute to the children's explorations by sharing comments or even your own skills. I am very much enjoying being with your children this year. I look forward to encouraging creativity, critical thinking and collaboration alongside our brilliant educators and to increase the children's love of learning.

