



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

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balamara preschool Newsletter

WELCOME

Welcome to the new year at Balamara Preschool. We are thrilled to have your child join our learning community this year. We look forward to supporting your children in their early learning and development through nurturing a safe and secure relationship that lays the foundation to all aspect of their learning explorations. While Balamara Preschool may be the very first Early childhood learning environment for some children, it is a new and different experience as their social network is expanding. For our children who are continuing with us from last year, they are now learning to make new friends and are supported to make an adjustment in learning to navigate the new and exciting social dynamics that our new children brings to our preschool.

Our philosophy embodies the role that families play in the construction of children's identities and understandings of the world which takes place through their early development and learning with their families as children's first and most influential educators. Our role as a service is to build trusting relationships and respectful partnerships with all our families, enabling us to deliver the best outcomes for the children in our preschool. In looking forward, acknowledging the present and staying open to new experiences, the team at Balamara Preschool welcomes your family into shaping a thriving community.

BALAMARA DAYS



We welcome Phineas, Lyra, Kingston, Aurelia, Yeseo, Lucas, Jacob, and Priiansh to Balamara Preschool!

Creating Magical Moments at Arrival



Imagine going on an exciting adventure to a new place. As you arrive, you were greeted with a warm smile, an engaging eye contact and being provided information about important points of interest. These gestures can be a significant part of establishing a welcoming and secure connection that makes the arrival a positive experience, supporting children in building their confidence and sense of belonging.

Additionally, the educators articulate their pedagogy of love through a professional and mindful internationality of practice called “Circle of Security”. This is an evidenced-based practice which focuses on the relationship that gives children emotional support (Dolby, 2007). Although applied throughout the year, it is commonly observed during arrival and when supporting children’s emotional needs during farewells. In creating magical moments at arrival by staying attuned to children’s feelings, enables for emotional connection to happen which fuels their social engagements and gives way for many learning opportunities.



Families can support their child’s emotional and social skills during arrival by establishing a predictable goodbye routine that is special between you and your child (e.g high five, fist bump, hug, finger hug, wave from the door/gate, read a book, sing a song good bye). We recommend parents to review the daily schedule with your child, help your child to get to know the primary educators first before you leave, give your child tools to use when missing family (e.g special cloth, photo of your family, share at least a few words of your home language to your child’s educator, and being timely by returning at the same time each day. This prevents your child from worrying if you have forgotten him or her when you are late. Modelling the greeting and farewell to your child’s educator but not forcing the child to it, will take the pressure off the child. However, If your child sees his/her/their parents greeting each other, teachers and friends, they will start to pick up on this habit.

Our Visual Daily Routine



Routines and Transitions as Opportunities For Learning

Routine plays a significant part of children's learning. Having a predictable yet flexible routine that is responsive to children's needs can support their sense of security and belonging. It offers powerful opportunities for connection, engagement and development.

Routine supports children to learn new skills in safe and familiar settings. The recurring nature of routines builds a child's self-confidence, develops and embeds knowledge, skills and behaviours across the learning outcomes.

The educators at Balamara Preschool use pictures of children engaging in different parts of the routine and putting it together as a visual schedule to enhance the effectiveness of supporting children reduce anxiety and confusion, preparing them to become independent as they move through transitions. The predictability and structure provides them with a clear way of understanding the process involved in tasks and anticipating future events, so they can organise their thoughts. This impacts on children's emotion regulation. A visual schedule enables all children with a range of communication skills to have access to the information, enhancing on their active participation and supporting them to flourish in their learning.

A copy of our visual routine is presented in variety of options such as displaying them in prominent areas, turning it into a social story in a form of a book which we add it in our book corner, and making lanyards of our visual routine.

Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) Breakdown - Jumping



Learning to jump has been our focus in our Fundamental Movement Skills program in the beginning of 2025. Each month, the children practiced a specific movement skill by providing them a variety of opportunities to jump. The educators are guided by their understanding on the breakdown of jumping which includes the take-off, flight and landing. Opportunities for children to engage in a range of coordinated movement skills through creative movement such as dancing builds on FMS breakdown on jumping. Scarves, ribbons and parachute has been used as props to engage children's arm movements, while marching and bending knees as part of dance steps supported children's balance. Engaging children in jumping games further enhanced their skills in integrating coordinated movement while educators provide them feedback on the breakdown of the steps in jumping. Supporting children's FMS through quality instruction minimises injuries and provide children the opportunity to persist with difficult task of learning more complex motor skills which can contribute to children more likely participating in physical activity as part of their lifestyle.

Tiny Bites, Big Flavour!



Welcome to our first cooking experience for the year. Our cooking experience was greatly inspired by children's shared story about the most exciting celebration they experience- their birthdays! We have turned children's interest about birthdays into a cooking experience by baking a lemon cake. Although children enjoy creating a delicious treat, a cooking experience is full of fun learning opportunities. It's a hands-on, sensory-rich experience that nurtures creativity, fosters teamwork, and is full of decadent educational ingredients such as math and science, language development, fine and gross motor skills, and social skills. Diving into the world of spatula, mixing bowls, whisk, and lemon squasher provided children the experience to handle and work with real life objects which help build their confidence in using a variety of materials.

Leaf It To Us: Sprouting Young Gardeners

Tying in with our focus on sustainability and healthy eating, we have re-established our vegetable garden with new seasonal plants. The produce varies from tomato, cucumber, lettuce and beans. This edible gardening promotes both environmental stewardship and helping children to own the responsibility for good health. When children take part in growing fresh foods, they are more willing to try them. Gardening is an excellent opportunity for children to learn where our food comes from and the process it takes to get into our plates. Promoting gardening into our curriculum teaches important concepts like biodiversity and resource conservation. It also enhances a sense of community as children take part in planting, caring, harvesting, and helping prepare their own tasty eating experiences.



Emergency Evacuation Practice

Fire drills and emergency safety routines teaches children what to do during an emergency and to ensure our staff are trained to handle such situations calmly and effectively.



The purpose of a fire drill is to familiarise and reinforce proper evacuation routes and practices. The goal is to have the proper actions be an automatic response whenever fire alarms sound, so that everyone safely evacuates the area in an orderly manner.

Lock down means that all windows and external doors are locked, and where possible internal doors are locked, with children and adults being moved to a room/position that does not allow them to be viewed.

The children will be alerted by an educator blowing the whistle and to follow an educator to our nearest exit and line up to walk safely to our car park area and for lock down we are all in the office safely and calm. If you hear your child say the Balamara address it is because we are teaching them to practice the emergency service 000. Please ask our staff if you wish to learn more about our Emergency Evacuation Policy.



Our Lunar New Year Celebrations



An opportunity for children to experience cultural celebrations other than their own helps develop empathy, cultural awareness, and self-confidence. This builds on children's understanding and appreciation for different perspectives, which ultimately prepares them for success in a multicultural world. Balamara reflects the multicultural diversity in our community. When provisions for multicultural diversity is embraced, children cognitive flexibility, is enhanced. During Lunar/Chinese New Year, a Balamara parent (Wendy) has been actively contributing to children's program and has shared her family's culture as an opportunity for children to connect and build confidence to embrace cultural differences.

There is strong evidence linking parent engagement with improvements in children achieving their learning outcomes. The partnership between preschool and families results in offering children different knowledge, expertise and resources to support children's learning and development (Department of Education, 2022). During Wendy's visit, she talked about traditional ways that her family celebrate Chinese New Year and the meaning behind these traditions. She prepared visual displays for children to explore for many weeks and engaged them in making snake charms. Wendy's visit has inspired the children to explore their own cultural identities by drawing the things that they love being Australian.



Zia- "This is me making bush medicines".
Zia's inspiration had come from learning about Australia's First Nation's Peoples using of bush medicines for healing.



Eason- "My family camps a lot and I love cooking in camp fires".



Annabelle's re-imagining of the Aboriginal flag.



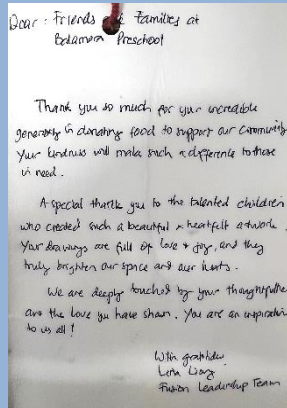
Birthday celebrations shared at Balamara Preschool is a great way to foster a sense of belonging and community among children. When children feel they are a valued member of a group, they are more likely to acquire social skills, self-esteem, and confidence.

Celebrations shared add rich opportunities in our curriculum. We have started our year exploring birthday celebrations and the many opportunities that it brings to children's learning. In January and February, we extended our birthday wishes and greetings to Zia, Kingston, Phineas, Jacob, and Aurelia. Balamara families are encouraged to speak to the educators about how their special celebrations can be incorporated into the learning environment.



We acknowledge the Darug and Guringai People, the traditional custodians of the land on which we play and learn. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

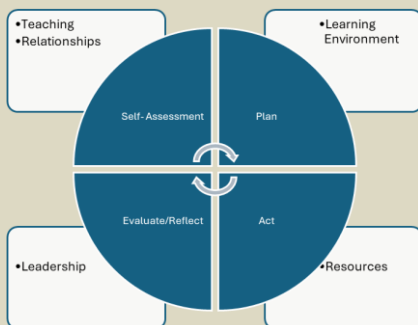
Maraming Salamat, Feichang ganxie nin, Bahut Shukriya, Gamsahabnida, Terima Kasih, Loi cam on nguoi nao, Thank You



Balamara Preschool recognises the role that we play in the community. We understand that our connections extend beyond the relationships we have with the children, and families at preschool, but we also believe in supporting local organisations in our community that helps strengthen the lives of local young people and families who are struggling with meeting the basic need such as food.

Each end of the year, our preschool have been supporting a local organisation called **FUSION**. The children and families at preschool have made generous donations to the community food pantry. Our children were involved in the process through the discussions they have with their educators, enabling them to develop an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens. A beautiful thank you card from the FUSION group has been received with love and much gratitude.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



“Engaging in ongoing self-assessment and quality improvement planning against the National Quality Standard drives continuous improvement and is essential to achieving high quality learning outcomes for children and families” (NSW Department Education, 2024).

Based on a collaborative self-assessment from the educators, families and children, we have identified the following goals that we are currently working from Term 1:

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice	Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety	Quality Area 3: Physical Environment	Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For children to use technology as an additional tool to promote multimodal literacy, and for children to become confident in using digital technologies in a safe way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a culturally safe environment by adapting trauma informed practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase our advocacy around sustainability by inviting Balamara families to participate in community recycling programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the preschool to develop a “Practice Guidebook”, which all educators can use when working towards best practice approach for the inclusion of all children.