

Curriculum update Term 2, Weeks 1 to 5

Regulate to learn

Our main focus this term has been on building the skills and dispositions needed for successful learning. This includes understanding how our mindset, behaviours and regulation of our emotions can influence our success as learners. How we feel can impact on ours and other's learning, especially at group times. Recognizing the importance of our group times as a shared way to learn together has helped our children recognize why they should be attentive and present during these times. To help the children gain understanding of the importance of group time learning, we acted out scenarios using toys to tell a story of a village of people who needed to share important information with all their people. Rather than telling everyone in the village independently, they created a Yarning circle where everyone met to teach and exchange important life messages. This learning was linked to real life examples of Aboriginal communities who utilize Yarning Circles and how we can learn from their practice.

In the photo, Hayley reminds the children about the importance of attentive behaviours using the Yarning Circle resource.



Successful learners regulate their emotions

For learning to be successful, our body needs to be in the appropriate Zone (Zones of regulation). No one learns well when they are emotional, hungry, tired, sick or have an internal engine running too fast or too slow. Becoming independent self-regulators takes time and practice to learn to listen to our bodies and work out what our needs are. We have continued with this learning at kindy this term through a resource called the Body Scan at relaxation times, The Body Scan is a short animation that helps us learn to focus on isolating the different parts of our body and how they are feeling. To help us prepare our minds and bodies for attentive listening at group times, we practiced taking focus breaths or stretching before beginning.



Photo: Learning how to listen to our bodies with the Body Scanner. You can find this on You Tube - try it at home!
<https://youtu.be/xLoK5rOl8Qk>

Successful learners persist

Learning is not always easy. Persistence (or try, try, try again) is sometimes what learning looks like or feels like. We want the children to begin to realize that when they persist with a challenging task, they are learning. Persisting is practicing. It is not giving up when something is tricky. It involves having a positive mindset to give it a go and to say "I can do it".

To help the children to build their ability to persist, we included physical learning to build strength, coordination and balance. It takes strength to hold our bodies up long enough to sit through group times or at a table to undertake learning tasks and stay attentive. Research has shown that body strength, coordination and balance are linked to academic success.



Left: Elijah D, Asher and Isla building their body strength and coordination on the obstacle course.

Right: Amelia persists with a challenging task of close observational drawing (of the stick insect) which takes time, dedication and focus.

Successful learning relies on communication skills

Successful learning is closely linked to good communication. Therefore, we have included rhyming, stories and exploring syllables into our program. We have also included activities that require listening to instruction/direction to help us be attentive and process what we hear into conscious thought – an extremely important skill for group time learning. Our set activities purposely incorporated play experiences that support conversation, including toy sets which provide mini characters to carry imaginative conversations. You may have noticed these play scenes around our kindergarten last week: the space play scene, nature folk table (with forest folk), jungle animal house, story table (Gruffalo) and the fairy village. We have also included as much visual representation of our conversations at group times as possible to support the children to hear and see what we are talking about to gain clearer understanding.



Photo (left): Victor is proud of his efforts to complete the task after lots of persistence.

Photo (right): Ivy and Sasha demonstrate their communication skills to retell the story of the Gruffalo.



How to set your child up for a day of successful learning

Healthy food and adequate sleep are the obvious, but often what we don't realize in our busy lifestyles is the value of restful time in our treasured, calm home. Make time to enjoy unstructured, slower paced time together to 'be in the moment' with your child.

Support your child to adopt an "I can do it" mindset by encouraging them to participate in daily tasks around the house and giving positive feedback (such as 'you did it, you are so helpful') when they have shown effort, to let them know you have noticed and appreciate their efforts. This will build your child's self-identity as capable and competent.

To encourage good communication skills, set them instruction challenges to follow. An example of this could include setting up a few different shopping bags in the kitchen and then saying: hop to the kitchen, look in the green shopping bag to find your snack. It is important that your child has not seen or expected this request of them before you ask to properly see if they can follow the verbal direction.