



"The key is curiosity, and it is curiosity, not answers that we model. As we seek to know more about a child, we demonstrate the acts of observing, listening, questioning and wondering. When we are curious about a child's words and our responses to those words, the child feels respected. The child is respected. "What are the ideas that I have that are so interesting to the teacher? I must be somebody with good ideas"."
- Vivian Paley

November Newsletter 2011.

Well, where has the year gone, and what a year it has been! There has been lots to celebrate, including times where as a country we have reflected on the importance of family and being a community.

Here at Bear Park, so much has happened in the classrooms, there have been investigations around Dinosaurs, fruit, plants, recycled materials, and our natural environment. Each team has been working with the children discussing theories, and discovering new areas of interest.

We had a parents evening in November which highlighted Katja, our atelierista's role here at Bear Park and how she supports the children's learning with an artists perspective. We have had numerous fun days, celebrating the All Blacks, Melbourne Cup Day and Diwali. And just this month We Partied the evening away at Auckland Zoo for Bear Park's 25th Birthday.



Pod 1. Fantail's...

Our investigation 'Constructing Our Own Intelligence' continues to be a journey of discovering the endless possibilities that both recycled and natural materials can offer. We are seeing the children construct their own intelligence in their unique and interesting ways each day. With the warmer weather here we have taken our investigation to the outdoors, offering the children opportunities to integrate the recycled materials with their natural outdoor environment. The children are choosing where to explore these materials, often using them in the sand pit to dig holes, and to transport sand. We are noticing how the children use their bodies in relation to the materials, each exploring their bodies capabilities in unique individual ways. Rolling, lifting, posting and communicating with the tubes in particular, are favourite and dominant ways of investigating the possibilities of this open ended resource.

Exploring recycled materials in the outdoors has sparked a new interest with our Fantail friends in discovering Papatuanuku (Mother

Earth). The Fantail children have begun to develop a real sense of wonderment and curiosity about the smaller details of the living world that surrounds them in the outdoors. As of recently, we have seen the children curiously exploring the soil and grass, the different plants and trees, the daisies, dry fallen leaves, the sand and bark, and the gorgeous yellow flowers hiding in the bushes.

To support this blooming interest in discovering and exploring Papatuanuku, we are researching our outdoor environment more and more each day, leaving our outdoor environment as simple and open as possible. We are also setting up areas within our outdoor spaces with different items of papatuanuku, and documenting the way the children discover and encounter these. With the warmer weather here, we are excited to venture out to our other classrooms outdoor spaces, to our local park at the bottom of Mount Hobson when possible, and to our special atelier garden, which has a beautiful water feature in it. We hope to set up exciting provocations indoors too, to provoke a sense of wonder and discovery for our inquisitive Fantails.



Pod 2. Morepork's...

In August we embarked on a new investigation which we called 'Not just a box'. This is about the children exploring and discovering the possibilities of integrating recycled, natural and non prescribed materials such as blocks) and seeing what potential and possibilities these materials have. We started this this investigation after observing the children's interest in constructing towers using just one material at a time. Although we had set provocations integrating the materials, the children still continued to use them separately. After discussion and working closely with our atelierista Katja, we decided to support the children in their investigation of the possibilities of each material on it's own, before slowly integrating them together. So far we have worked with recycled and natural materials separately and we are currently

working on the integration of these two together. We decided to re-name our investigation 'Integration of Materials' to keep it more true to what the children were investigating. Most recently we have been exploring these materials outdoors and have spent some time re-visiting some of our earlier provocations with boxes out in the piazza with some larger appliance boxes.

We are excited to see what the New Year will bring and what materials we can collect over the break to add and extend on our investigation. We will be sending home a plastic bag over the Christmas break, and attached will be a piece of paper with some suggestions of different recycled materials. We ask if you can please help us collect some different materials to help build our collection back up. Any natural materials such as shells, feathers, stones or bits of driftwood would be much appreciated too.





Pod 3. Kea's...

Over the last few months the Kea children have taken a strong interest in dinosaurs. This interest stemmed from a few of our children attending the "Walking with Dinosaurs" show and them sharing their experiences at Bear Park. Stories, videos, books and programs were shared and many of our Kea's were captivated by these creatures. The main focus at the start of the investigation centered around the dinosaurs' physical characteristics; their long necks, tails, and sharp teeth. Drawing became the first medium in which the children used to express their ideas. Throughout this experience, there was so much discussion about what dinosaurs look like, sounded like and where they lived. Using our environment as the third teacher we moved some of classroom around to create a 'Dinosaur Area' for the children.

This area helped provide a space where the children could act out their stories, transport themselves into a dinosaur world, and construct their own dinosaur habitats. Another medium we were using was composition work, with natural and recycled to look at the idea of 'form'. The children were creating amazing compositions with materials such as corks, metal clips, leaves and shells, and explaining their creations as they worked.

Recently the children have been enjoying the OHP in the dinosaur area, looking at shape, shadow, movement, size and scale. Using the OHP has also been a great tool for the children to collaborate their ideas, work together and learn from each other. As our investigation starts to come to a concluding point, we are excited about the new possibilities that have begun to emerge, and look forward to exploring these in the New Year.

Pod 4. Tui's... The Natural World.

Recently, as many of you already know, we have begun a new investigation into, 'healthy foods'. This has given us cause to stop and rethink the vegetation and surroundings right outside our very own doorstep, and with this, a recognition for the beautiful creatures which also reside here. We have been amazed at our discoveries of snails, butterflies, slugs, and bees, and while encountering them have taken the time to discuss, draw and share our own knowledge and theories on these creatures. Some of the debates have been a little heated as the children can be very passionate about their own ideas, but we are trying to continue the Tui class as a place of democracy, where thoughts and ideas can be shared and disputed but we all have the right to believe what we do.

Exploring the natural world has also given some of our construction enthusiasts the opportunity to construct a bridge for the snails, who apparently don't like moving over bark,

Other days we are surrounded with blossoming flowers of many types; some are gifts from the interest bag, some gifts from either children, parents

and teachers in the centre. With these we ask for time to be given as we take in the shapes, luminous colour and delicate fragrances we are exposed to as we draw our faces closer to really get to know them. Each day the children notice more and share more in-depth observations, allowing their vocabulary to grow as our ideas and confidence in sharing in this manner grow also. The children have revisited their experiences and further developed their ideas as to what kinds of plants and vegetation that we and our friends may like for a garden of our own here at Bear Park.



The gift of giving

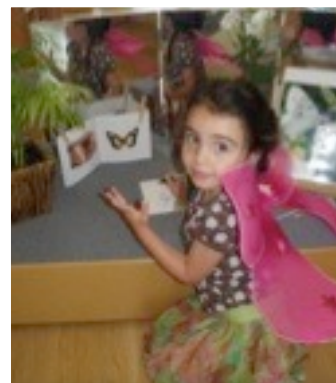
This year we are collecting presents to gift to the “**Ronald McDonald House**” This is an organisation which gives families stability and resources so they can keep their child healthy and happy whilst their child is undergoing treatment, visiting hospital or getting dental care in a vulnerable community. They not only help families address these problems, they provide solutions for these and other issues related to the health and well being of children.

Ronald McDonald House have asked that we do not bring in used soft toys, play dough or toys with glitter. Some ideas of gifts could be books, puzzles or games. Please don't wrap these as the organization will hand out what is appropriate for each child.

So when your next at the shops, grab something extra knowing that it won't only be your child smiling this Christmas.



From all the teams here at Bear Park, we wish you and your family a happy, relaxing and safe Christmas holiday Break.



Important Reminders:

Holiday hours: We will be closing on the 23rd December at 12pm. We will re-open on the 4th of January and for this day, the 5th and 6th we have shorter opening hours of 8am-430pm. We will be closed on the 9th January for a Teacher Only Day and will resume normal hours on the 10th of January.

Sign In and Out: Please remember to sign your child in and out every day. It is imperative that we have an accurate record of children present in the Centre at all times.

Notice of Absence: If your child is unwell or unable to attend their regular session for any reason, we ask that you notify us at the earliest possible convenience.

Holiday Leave: Don't forget to fill out a Holiday Leave Form if you are planning to be away from the Centre for an extended period of time. This not only ensures accurate invoicing but also assists the teachers when planning ways to support and extend your child's learning.

Hats for Summer: It is vital that every child has a named hat for the summer time to wear outside, so if your child does not have one please bring one in.