



The Early Learner

No. 1

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Principal's Message

I am delighted to endorse the publication of the inaugural *Aranmore Catholic Primary Early Childhood Newsletter* which has been a wonderful initiative of our early childhood team.

A good beginning to life is well recognised as the foundation for future development, health and wellbeing, not only in the early years but also throughout life. With this in mind our early childhood educators therefore play such an integral role in shaping the future of our little ones.

Teaching at any level is a skilled profession geared toward facilitating learning and promoting emotional, intellectual and social development. Early childhood teaching involves promoting the development of basic skills, coordination, creativity and expression; evaluating the progress of children in all of the basic areas of development; working with other professionals and specialists to assist children needing remedial intervention in any area of development as well as providing a positive role model in all aspects of social life.

One of the other key tasks of early childhood teachers is discussing with parents aspects of their child's development and the aims of the education program. This vital relationship with parents aids in the ultimate goal of helping each child reach their full potential. Hence this home-school partnership plays a central role.

This newsletter has been created to celebrate and support the creativity and dedication of all those who participate in the education of our young children and I congratulate the early childhood team on their outstanding effort.

I hope that you enjoy the first of many publications to come and view this newsletter as a valuable addition to the school's early childhood communication to parents.

Margaret Williamson
Principal

PLAY TODAY

You say you love your children,
And are concerned that they learn
today?
So am I - that's why I'm providing
A variety of all kinds of play.
You're asking me the value
Of blocks and other such play?
Your children are solving problems
They will use that skill every day.
You're asking what's the value of having
your children play?
Your daughter's creating a tower;
She may be a builder some day.
You're saying you don't want your son,
To play in that "baby" way?
He's learning to cuddle a doll;
He may be a father some day.
You're questioning the interest centres;
They just look like useless play?
Your children are making choices.
They'll be on their own some day.
You're worried your children aren't
learning,
And later they'll have to pay?
They're learning a pattern for learning.
For they'll be learners always.

Leila P Fagg



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SETTLING INTO SCHOOL

For some children and parents, it's one of the hardest goodbyes – the day when you leave your child at school for the first time.

Following are 8 tips to help your child settle at school – each of these alone or together will help you and your child ease into the new experience:

- 1. Manage Your Own Anxiety:** if your child finds it difficult to adjust to change, it's natural for you to also feel concerned about them. Avoid sharing your worries with your child by asking questions that might hint at your thoughts. For example, instead of saying "Was it okay at school today? Did you meet any friends? Do you like your teacher?", you might try "This is what I did today So, tell me something interesting about your day, what did you do?" and "What do you play with in the classroom?" and "Is there something special in the classroom that you would like to try doing?"
- 2. Remain Empathetic:** although it's best not to share your own worries, it's important to remain open and expressive about how you think your child might be feeling. So when your child is on the way to school and looks nervous, or starts to cry in the playground, you can let him or her know you empathise: "You're looking upset. I wonder if you are thinking about saying goodbye?" or "It is hard to get used to a new school, and sometimes it feels lonely to be sitting with new people," and simply ask your child: "How are you feeling?"
- 3. Listen:** to how your child is feeling and validate those feelings – you don't need to solve the problem or take the situation away – and after all, you can't, because your child has to start school. However, by listening and letting your child know his or her feelings are normal, you are teaching them to accept themselves and their feelings and letting them know it is okay to talk about them to you. A child whose feelings have been validated is more likely to remain calm, be ready to listen and work with you to find ways to adjust to the new situation.
- 4. Meet Other Parents:** try to meet other new parents as soon as possible so that you can organise some afternoon tea or weekend play dates for your child. If you are working, and can't be in the playground at drop-off time, other options include volunteering to become the class parent, going to P&C meetings, personally dropping your child to early band or choir practice where you may meet other parents, and asking your child's teacher who would
- 5. Get Up Early and Turn off the Television:** in those early weeks, it's worthwhile getting yourself and your child up earlier than you might later in the term. Those precious hours of gradually getting ready for school, slowly eating breakfast together, getting used to the routine of packing a bag and putting on a uniform, can make a difference by helping your child feel calm and more ready for saying goodbye. Leave the television off so that you are both focused on enjoying the morning together and 'getting ready' – your child does not need extra distractions. If there is spare time, you can use it to get to school earlier for a play, or send your child outside for some active play before he or she has to enter the more structured environment of the classroom.
- 6. Praise Successes:** even if your child had a teary start to the day, when you pick him or her up, remind them that even though they were sad to say goodbye, they stayed at school and played and did their best. For example, you can say "I know you were sad to say goodbye this morning, but well done for going into class and doing all those wonderful things today – I love the way you have painted my smile in this painting and the colours you painted on my dress. I wonder what you will paint tomorrow?"
- 7. Work with the Teacher:** ask your child's teacher for support with a routine that will help your child adjust to saying goodbye and entering the classroom. If you think your child needs a little longer with you before saying goodbye, try to get to school earlier to give your child time to talk to you, have their feelings validated and then start a routine with the help of the teacher. For example, you might hold their hand and reassure them before you wave goodbye.
- 8. Be Realistic:** if your child does find change difficult, it's realistic to expect he or she will take a few weeks to adjust to school. Look for small signs of progress, such as a shorter time to say good bye, or less time crying, or happier smiles when you pick your child up – these signs will be gradual but they are worth noting so that you also feel positive about your child's ability to eventually adjust to school. Many children come home in the first weeks of school feeling grumpy, tired and hungry – if you expect this, and you're ready with nutritious food and drink, a warm hug, not too many after-school activities and an empathetic ear, you will help your child cope better with his or her new, and often exhausting school routine.

<http://www.happychild.com.au>

PLAY IN THE EARLY YEARS

The education of young children has been the centre of unprecedented attention in recent years. Research has shown that play is vital to the development of skills; concepts and approaches children will need in order to be effective learners throughout their lives. It is therefore essential that schools support early education methods in their early year's classrooms that make full use of play and child-initiated activities.

Play enables children to not only learn about their world, but also their way of learning about themselves and how they fit into the world. Play is essential to a child's healthy growth and development. It is the basis for the skills children will develop and use later in life. Play is how children learn: they learn about and understand the world around them and how they fit into it. Play provides benefits for cognitive, social, emotional, physical and moral development.



A play-centred curriculum is not the same as giving children 'free play' separate from 'teaching'. Teachers use the power of children developing ideas, interests and competencies to promote learning through play, class time and small group activities. Play is not a break from the curriculum; it is one way of implementing the curriculum.

To facilitate learning through play teachers in early years classrooms guide and extend children's play to make sure children are developing in all areas and key learning goals are achieved. Through careful, trained observations of children's play, the teacher can assess each child's learning needs.

Play enhances learning and development for children in many different ways. Play-based learning activities such as the ones listed below provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Play often involves physical activity and is therefore closely related to the development and refinement of children's gross and fine motor skills and their body awareness.



SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Play with other children provides the rich experience children need to learn social skills; become sensitive to other children's needs, and also helps them learn self control.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

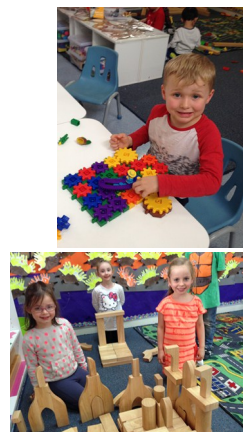
Research has shown that there is a strong relationship between play and cognitive development, play also improves a child's attention, their planning skills and language development.

PRETEND PLAY

Imaginative play is important to a child's development. Children need opportunities to act and dress up like people they know. Children develop the ability to use their I imaginations to represent objects, people and ideas. Through dramatic play with objects, people and imagined situations in the home corner children develop their oral language skills and capacity for narrative. Oral language skills and an understanding of narrative form the foundation for children to produce more coherent writing.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOGIC

Through play with blocks, playdoh, sand, water and other materials, children develop skills in logic. Through experimenting, observing, comparing and working with shapes and sizes children develop a basis for their understanding of mathematics and science.



OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play provides many benefits for children. It provides opportunities for children to explore, build, climb, hide and move about which encourages curiosity and creativity. It offers children the opportunity to increase physical activity which develops muscle strength and coordination.

WHY READ WITH CHILDREN!

- Reading can become a favourite hobby which children can go on to enjoy all their lives.
- Reading/story time can be a special time for both parents and children.
- If reading/story time is a warm relaxed time, it helps build good relationships between you and your child and helps to show that reading is a happy thing to do.
- Stories can help children deal with problems and fears.
- Showing pictures and saying the name of what is in the picture helps children learn what things are called and extends their vocabulary.
- Stories help to develop a child's imagination.
- Most importantly your child will thrive on spending time with you. Reading and telling stories to your child can become a very special sharing time which helps them to learn to love books and to develop a sense of being a lovable person. Many children remember their story times for the rest of their lives.
- Special story time at bedtime is one of the things that can help your child to prepare for a relaxed sleep and enjoy bedtime.



WHY STORIES ARE IMPORTANT

Stories help children to cope with their feelings and problems. Story time can be a special caring time which they will remember all their lives. Whether they are the stories you tell or stories in books, stories are one of the ways that children learn to enjoy reading.



Children can also learn that books are a way to find out lots of useful and important things. Many people often look back with pleasure on their favourite stories from childhood.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEAM

Mrs Janine DelGrossi

Mrs Anna Tancredi

Mrs Lorna Brook

Miss Sarah Raspa

Miss Cassandra Lioni

Miss Catherine Connell

Mrs Angie Lionetta-Civa

Mr Peter Scutti

Ms Laura Nelson

Mrs Eleonora Panaia

Mrs Anna Drew

Ms Joanne Cox

Mrs Karen Krikstolaitis

Mrs Teresa Torre

Ms Sharon Tzaicos

Mrs Natalie Vuong

Mrs Julie Gannaway

Mrs Narelle Paolino

Ms Pam Rimmer