

# Elder Street Pedagogical Post

May 2023

Learning  
and  
Discoveries  
in the  
Possum  
room



**Possum Connection-** With the year in full swing, it has been lovely to look back on the past few months and see the connection the Possum children have not only formed with educators, but, the real connections we are starting to see between the children. We have been observing common interests between the children, clearly the forefront of these ongoing connections.

We have seen many of the children engaging in experiences with the monster trucks. This interest sparked from the beginning of the year, and has filtered down between the children through their developing connections. It is wonderful to see the older children support this interest with their younger peers.

From a young age, the ability to create noise is how we communicate. Since the beginning of the year we have noticed the children finding joy in the creation of noise. Using a range of materials, instruments or simply their voice, this inherent skills has brought the Possums together. Educators have continued to support this, by engaging in a range of action and musical focused group times.

Touch is an important part of connection, not only to one another, but to the environment. Educators have been exploring with the children, the concept of using gentle hands with everything they engage with. From one another, to the toys and to their environments, we have explored the impact our hands can have. Although this will be a working concept for quite sometime as the children work their way through their growing stages of development, we will continue to look back with them at this learning taking place.





**MARK MAKING**— Creating a mark on a page is a wonderful experience for young children, as they begin to identify the impact they can create. In the Possum room, the children have been exploring this concept both individually and as a group. Educators have offered a range of mediums, during different mark making experiences, to see how the children interact with different resources. Using pencils, textas, crayons and paint, the children have shown excitement as they experiment and engage. In order to continue to strengthen their developing connection, educators supported the children to engage in collaborative artwork, using one piece of paper to create a collective piece of art. The children shared joy in this experience as they engaged alongside their peers.



**WATER PLAY** - During the first few months of the year, the Possum children found joy and excitement while engaging in water play experiences. This was a wonderful opportunity to support forming connections in a larger space and provided opportunities for shared learning to take place. To families, this might often look like more wet clothes being sent home, but for the children it is moments of excitement, experimentation and investigation. The water tank along with the creek bed are the perfect space to dip toes in, while the trough provides a deeper body of water to investigate and explore together.

*Love,  
Lauren, Casey, Chloe  
and Roxi  
xxx*



**SHARING A BOOK** - Spending time snuggled together on the lounge is always a wonderful way children can settle into a new learning environment. For our Possum children this year, it seemed to be a point of shared interest. It provided a space where the group could investigate their shared interests such as; trucks, actions and animals through stories. Educators arranged the room to provide a small inviting space to come together. Since this addition we have noticed families taking time to share in this space during drop off.



## Reconnecting and engaging in the Joey room



**ART BOOKS:** In the Joey room, the children often spend time eagerly experimenting with different art mediums while expressing their ideas, experiences and learning. Parallel to this exploration and learning, educators began to notice the amount of paper that was being placed in the recycling bin and being left in the classroom at the end of each day. Educators engaged in many critical discussions to discover a way to reduce the wastage of paper, while taking into consideration the balance between creative exploration and the importance of sustainability. The idea of an 'art book' was brought to the table, which challenged our next reflection of how to identify which art book belonged to each child. Rather than writing down each child's name or systematically photographing the children to place on the cover of the art books, we sought the opportunity for embedding traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artistic inspiration. Each artwork was ethically purchased online from various organisations that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples both in our local and broader communities. Each of these beautiful artworks were chosen by educators for each individual child with the hope that the children would connect with the art piece, the artist, the story of the artwork and the country the artwork was created on. On the inside cover, the children and educators have engaged in the research process to gather information about the artist and the land they are from. Relationships with the land remain fundamental to the identity and way of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. Many of the artworks displayed on the children's art books have direct ties to the traditional country, beliefs and culture of the artist. To pay respects to the artist and engage in meaningful connection, the children are progressively exploring the process of locating the country of their artist on the AIATSIS map and pin pointing it, as a form of documentation. Since their introduction into the room, the Joey children have really taken ownership of their books. They can each correctly identify their book from the collection on the shelf, and begin to engage in creative experiences as they choose. It is wonderful to see the group gravitating towards this experience each day.





**THE ATELIER** - The art studio has been a wonderful learning environment for the Joey children throughout the beginning of the year. The atelier is a learning environment where educators provide a range of creative mediums to challenge, extend and inspire the children through a range of concepts and ideas stemming from their interests and learning focuses. In the coming months, educators plan to use this space to delve deeper into the children's creativity, by provoking their thinking and challenging their creativity in exciting and engaging ways.

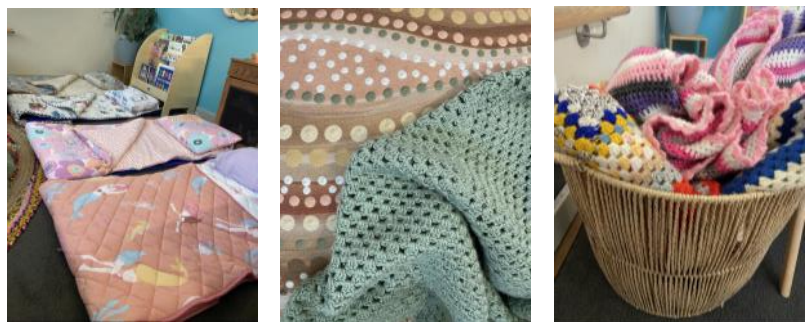


*Love,  
 Bree, Paula, Sarah,  
 Carley and Leisa  
 xx*



**REST TIME** - Educators engaged in reflective conversations about the children's rest period throughout the day and found we needed to unpack this to create a more meaningful and engaging time for the Joey children. Educators introduced several new rituals to this period of the day to assist the children who choose not to sleep or have limited sleeping times. Firstly a sand timer was introduced, to provide a visual for the children and to remind them of how long to rest their bodies, either on a bed or on a pillow on the mat. Secondly, we introduced some lovely crochet blankets, created by Bree grandmothers, for the children to snuggle under. This practice has now formed a new routine with the children in the Joey's room and after lunch, the children are asked to either lay on their beds, or grab a blanket and spend time relaxing their bodies until the sand falls through the timer. This has been a wonderful addition to the Joey rest time and is clearly being enjoyed by the children.

**DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION** - The Joey room has been exploring the concept of digital documentation throughout the beginning of the year. Educators take time throughout the day to record snapshots of the children's interests and learning taking place across the centre and combine this into a video at the end of the day. We believe it has been a wonderful way to provide families with a different perspective of what happens in the Joey Room throughout the day. The children have responded well to the addition of this form of documentation. We love sitting together on a pillow at the end of the day, revisiting the learning that has taken place as well as looking back at earlier videos created. We are planning to introduce more of this form of documenting into our daily program throughout the rest of the year. Eventually this will become part of our weekly daybooks and will be introduced in the other rooms also. We hope you have enjoyed sharing them as a family, as much as we have enjoyed creating them.



## Exploring and imagining in the Wallaby room



**The Wonder-Ful Hundred** - Storytelling and literacy started to become a large part of the Wallaby Room and was the obvious choice to move onto after our unit of work on emotions. At the beginning of the project, educators conducted a room change, in order to harness the children's ideas and interests in a productive manner.

**The Library**- At Elder Street we value and respect literacy in all its forms and part of this exploration was to support the children in understanding the precious resource that is a book. To do this, we have created a library like environment where respect for our books is key. It is wonderful to see the children reminding one another of the correct way to treat our books. Our library has prompted the expansion of our engagement with texts as the Wallaby children bring their favourite stories in from home to share. Educators have future plans to visit the Lambton library as an extension to the children's developing interest.

**Creative space**- The second area designed for this project, focuses on a large space, to simply be creative. This area, is a permanent space within the room, providing the children with time to explore and engage with it in their own unique way. The children are encouraged to explore their creativity and imagination, through different forms of literacy and self-expression. A great interest in puppet play has erupted within this environment as the children use the projector to create a shadowing effect on the wall. Using these puppets, the children created their own stories, building on each other's ideas and sparking connection between their thinking.

**Story telling through 'The Hundred Languages'**- Educators have adopted the pedagogical strategies of 'The Hundred Languages' as they engage in and support the children's interest in storytelling. They have engaged with storytelling through a range of materials, mediums and resources which continue to provoke thinking and imagination.





"When awareness is brought to an emotion, power is brought to your life"—Tara Meyer Robson

Love,  
Ellie, Olivia,  
Hannah and  
Leisa  
xxx

**BLOOMING INTO ME**—To begin the year, educators and children engaged in a unit of work around our emotions. In collaboration with the families, we noticed many of our children needed a little extra support in exploring, engaging with and understanding their emotions. To create a safe space for this to occur, we focused on supporting the children's sense of belonging within the environment and creating a space they felt welcome in. Educators used books targeting specific emotions to support the children's understanding of what the emotion is, what it feels like and how it may impact others. The children responded well to this and began to develop their vocabulary and ability to share the emotions they were feeling. Once recognising the emotions, we looked at developing strategies to regulate their emotions and calm their bodies when required.



**CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL REFORM**

Through the beginning of the year, educators in the Wallaby room engaged in a critical reflection on the practices, intention and teachings within the Wallaby room. This provoked a critical reform, which has sparked change to some of our routines, practices and teaching styles throughout our days at Elder Street. These changes were influenced by the plan to provide children with more opportunities for autonomy and choice. Our children and families have responded well to these changes of practice and we can see the benefits in the children's days in care.

Our major change with the routine, is the focus on unhurried time. The concept of unhurried time brings to the forefront the children's right to a choice. To engage with this concept, we have introduced progressive meal times. Children are encouraged to listen to their bodies and decide when they feel hungry. As part of this, we have adopted a picnic style morning tea and afternoon tea where the children gather together, if they choose, to enjoy food. This has provoked connection and conversation between the children and is an opportunity to discuss healthy eating and food choices and links with the Reggio Emilia concept of sharing meals together. At lunch, the children have the opportunity to join the lunch time table, when they feel it is the right time for them to have something to eat. At the table, the children are encouraged to portion out their own food, controlling their food intake based on their idea of feeling hungry.

# Harmony day 2023



Harmony day celebrates the diversity of Australia. Celebrating this day aims to foster inclusiveness, respect and the idea that all different cultures can make a valuable contribution to society.

This year, we approached our Harmony day celebration a little differently and engaged in learning as a whole centre. Experiences were set up in a range of learning environments around the centre. The children were provided with the opportunity to move freely throughout the space and engage where and for how long they chose. This created a wonderful opportunity for the children to interact within a large age range during the experiences, support one another, build on ideas and simply enjoy their time together.

To the educators of Elder Street, this was a wonderful experience that really depicted what learning in Harmony is to us. Together, supported, connected, inclusive and filled with love.

***“When the pursuit of natural harmony is a shared journey, great heights can be attained” –Lynn Hill***

