

# Elder Street Pedagogical Post

April 2021

## The first few months in the Possum room - building beautiful connections

### TOGETHER-NESS

The Possum room has started 2021 off establishing meaningful relationships with each and every child. Much of the children's play has been formed around the idea of 'Together-ness' as these strong connections continue to develop. Together-ness is an important factor in building a real community of learners.

Developing this sense of together-ness and engaging in experiences utilising this, can be used to develop the children's skills in order to take part in collaborative learning processes. This sense of together-ness has been explored through play experiences such as; lying on the ground together, singing familiar songs, building on communication and a collaborative artwork now displayed as you enter the Possum room.

This has sparked further exploration into this sense of being together and creating a community of learners. Educators have spent the last few months utilising our developing knowledge of the children and understanding of the learning concept of together-ness to continue to foster this further.



### HARMONY DAY

The Harmony Day questionnaire was inspired by the children's togetherness and connections through play that educators have noticed. The Possum team would like to thank the families that have responded. It has given them an insight into each family's culture and provided them a pathway to connect with the Possum room and pedagogy as a diverse community.

In addition to this questionnaire we engaged in several learning experiences which fostered the children understanding of diversity, uniqueness and recognising our individual differences. This idea is something we in the Possum room have placed high value on and intend to follow this learning throughout our program continuing to link back to our initial exploration of together-ness.

Small world play has been a great way for the children to explore similarities and differences among a range of people. In addition to this the children have utilised the small world to connect with experiences and knowledge from their home lives and share this in a interactive manner.

Children and educators have been exploring musical instruments and connecting this to cultural songs and music. Genres have different effects on our movements and feelings around music. As we explore this with the children they have been experimenting with different ways to move their bodies; wiggling hips, clapping, waving hands, and twirling and the children's bodies (and ears) have been responding to these different genres of music.



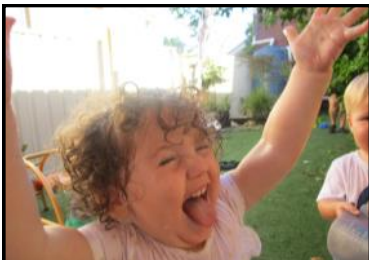
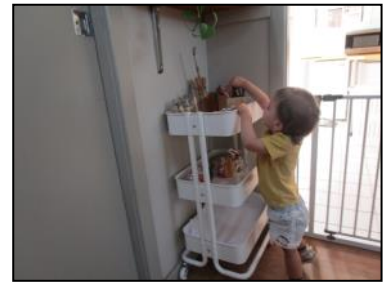
## CARING FOR OTHERS

In connection to each of the learning achievements touched on in this post so far, the children have demonstrated their ability to interact with others showing kindness, empathy and respect. It is wonderful to see the Possum children approach one another with each others best interest at heart. This caring and compassion can also be seen as the children engage in play with the dolls. Educators have provided two different doll set ups in each of the environments. With indigenous dolls inside and multicultural dolls outside the children explore their care giving roles while exploring similarities and differences, not only between the dolls but one another also.



## THE ATELIER

Educators have introduced a trolley into the room to support the understanding of interacting with the concept of an Atelier. An Atelier is an integral part of the Reggio Emilia Approach giving identity and shape to the culture of engaging in arts based learning through the concept of the 100 languages. The Atelier is a workshop or studio area where the children can freely access materials in order to create through whatever mediums they choose. This space provides the children with opportunities that promote agency in their learning. In our room this space consists of mediums such as pencils, textas, clay, play-dough and paint as well as resources such as paper and manipulating tools. Educators regularly see the children accessing these materials inspiring educators to follow their lead and interest during their play experiences.



## OUTDOORS

Our natural environment has played a huge part in our learning this year. From introducing natural elements indoors such as flower arrangements, natural loose parts and natural elements such as clay to our sensory exploration in the outdoor environment itself.

Outdoor learning spaces offer a vast array of possibilities not available indoors. Play spaces in natural environments include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements from nature (DEEWR, 2009). Outdoors the children have been eager to explore the water environment with different resources. This has involved measurement using cups, jugs and other vessels, watering the garden with rain water from the tank and enjoying a sensory experience by splashing, sitting and laying in the water. Educators are wondering if there is more that links this exploration or is it the simple engagement with water that sparks the initial attraction.

This outdoor learning space continues to link with the elements of together-ness and understanding of diversity we have been exploring across our program since the beginning of the year. In this space the children have spent lots of time just enjoying being 'together' interacting, enjoying a cuddle, constructing on the mat, engaging with the plants and starting to care for their environment.

Love,

Paula, Bree, Jena, Olivia, Keely, Jess and Casey x

**Joeys Room– The first few months of developing our learning relationships.**



**TRUCKS**

Educators have seen an interest in truck play, formulated through their engagement in small world play within the environment. This interest inspired educators to introduce several resources to stimulate this play throughout the room. The Joeys began to explore their environment at a new level, using the truck as a vehicle in which they explored the room. This has provided the children with the opportunity to develop new understandings of their environment, what is important to them and where their interests lie.



**COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS**

When looking at the children's play and interactions since the beginning of the year educators noticed the children's sense of wanting to be together. The common theme in their play experiences seems to be the fact they are doing so together. Here at Elder Street, we follow a socio-cultural approach to children's learning. We believe children learn best when they are in social environments, stimulated and challenged by their involvement with others. As they continue to develop their pro-social skills such as sharing, helping, problem solving and caring for others, educators notice the group sharing humour, satisfaction and a sense of achievement in their play. Educators are in the process of unpacking the children's play and determining the effects this interest in social connection has on their learning. Through these connections, we can see the group becoming a real community of learners. A community of learners is a group of people who support each other in their collective and individual learning. As the group continues to grow throughout the year we believe the children will continue to create lasting connections.



**INQUIRY BASED LEARNING**

Inquiry based learning is an approach which highlights the children's role in the learning process. Children are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and share ideas throughout their engagement in an experience. It is clear this approach to the children's play and learning is working well for the Joey children. Educators can see their learning is far more engaging when it is explored with inquiry. They demonstrate their curiosity and understanding as they engage in learning around a range of ideas, theories and concepts. Through this play the children have been engaging in concepts such as trial and error as well as cause and effect. These concepts have stimulated their drive to discover the what, how and why of an experience.



## GREEN THUMBS

Educators place high value on children's interactions with their natural environment. As children engage in the space they develop a love and care for this environment which supports the development of people who nurture and respect the planet later in life. For the Joey children the outdoor environment has been one of rich and meaningful learning as they engage in gardening experiences. During these experiences the children have followed the life cycle of a plant and the care and nurturing practices needed in order for them to grow. Educators have also observed many of the children incorporating these new understandings during their interactions in other areas of play.

The community garden has been a major part of their engagement with the environment as they spent plenty of time here. This has not only been a place of education for the Joeys as they garden and maintain this space but also an environment where they have been able to come together, sharing mealtimes, stories and group exploration.



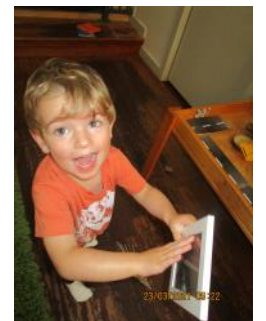
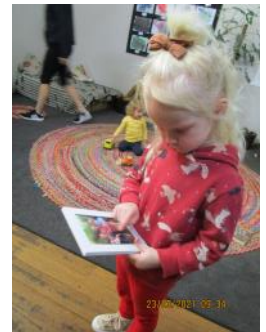
## CONNECTIONS TO HOME

It is important for all children to establish a sense of belonging within their environment in order for them to feel safe, secure and supported. One of the many ways educators support this development is to help the children establish connections between home and Elder Street. One of the ways educators in the Joey room are attempting to support this connection is by the introduction of family photos. Educators have introduced a shelf where the photos are kept. The Joey children do like to involve these photos into their play and daily interactions as well. Often the children carry them around, placing them on the table for meal times with loved ones, handing peers their own photos in times of need and noticing when a new photo is added. This has been a really special addition to the Joey environment, one which the children seem to really be connected to.

Sharing experiences which have taken place outside of Elder Street such as holidays, weekend outings and special events has also been a lovely way our Joey children have made connection with their home environment. By making these events part of our conversations here at Elder Street we see the children integrate these into play with peers. Not only does this play support the children making sense of their environment and the world around them, it also demonstrates they are comfortable within their environment freely exploring these ideas with peers.

Love,

Lauren, Ellie, Jena, Olivia, Keely, Casey and Jess x



## Learning and Exploration in the Wallaby room over the first few months of the year.....



**LOVE IS LOVE** - Throughout the month of March, educators reflected on the importance of exploring inclusion and the diversity of love with the children. Through discussions with the children we determined that we can love who ever we want to love and that the world is full of people just like it is full of colours. These discussions sparked the children's curiosity and provided them the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas with each other. They also prompted an idea of colouring the front stairs 'rainbow' to represent love and inclusion at Elder Street.

**HARMONY DAY** - The timing of the above learning coincided with Harmony Day, a nation wide day that celebrates the inclusion and diversity of everyone in our world. From the 22nd - 26th March children shared discussions, recreated ideas through a range of art mediums and shared stories about inclusion and diversity. Although this week is set aside on the calendar to celebrate 'Harmony' in our world, these experiences have continued throughout March and April. The Wallabies show a sound understanding of these concepts and intertwine them into their social interactions, art experiences and shared learning exploration with ease.



***"Children use processes such as exploration, collaboration and problem solving across all aspects of curriculum. Developing dispositions such as curiosity, persistence and creativity enables children to participate in and gain from learning" (DEEWR, 2009)***

### PROCESSES AND HOW THINGS WORK

The children have been showing an increasing interest in the steps and processes needed to accomplish certain tasks. This learning began from a simple colour mixing experience and has evolved into covering a wide variety of hypotheses.

The children experimented with white flowers and coloured dye. This learning began from a simple idea from Lucy. The children were intrigued by what would happen. When questioned about the outcome the children were quick to share their thoughts. "The sap is drinking up all of the water" - Lucy. "Because the water is licking up all of the colours" - Harper. "Because we put so many colours in there and the flowers are drinking up the water" - Elliott.

Max provided all of the materials needed for a balloon experiment which involved a balloon shooting along a piece of string. The children were engaged as Max shared his knowledge and ideas. There was some trial and error as the experiment didn't quite work as planned but the children adjusted their thinking and adapted new theories.

Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating. These skills have proven so beneficial as the children want to know and learn more and use their skills to solve problems and discover new ideas and ways of doing things.



**STRENGTHENING FRIENDSHIPS** - When children move into a new space the relationships they shared can sometimes change or feel a little different. We had the merging of two groups of children this year from the Joey and Wallaby rooms so we wanted to really spend time nurturing these connections and supporting the children in building new friendships and strengthening ongoing ones. Through observation and sharing meaningful conversations throughout play with the children, it is already evident that new bonds have been formed. These bonds help to provide a solid base for the children's sense of belonging within the Elder Street Environment. As Educators we love watching them develop and seeing the children's care and love for each other.



**SOCIO - DRAMATIC PLAY** - Where do I start? This play has laid the platform and supported the children in so many areas of their learning since the beginning of the year. We have seen such a range of experiences both child and teacher led over the past few months including; hairdressers, cubby building, cooking, truck play, caring for babies... the list goes on.



Socio- dramatic play allows children to explore and create new worlds. The possibilities really are endless. This teaching practice can be a powerful tool for learning language and social skills. Children take on roles and characters, act out scenarios and stories and solve problems using language and movement. They also develop negotiating roles, turn taking and the ability to read social cues. This play provides a safe space where children can build on friendships, be themselves, step out of their comfort zones and be silly. Children are able to build on being part of a community of learners, sharing their ideas and conversing with others who share similar interests.





**CENTRE PHILOSOPHY REVIEW** - As educators we believe that it is vital that the children's voices are heard and they play a significant part in shaping the philosophy. The children and educators shared lots of conversation and discussion about what they love about and what is important to them at Elder Street as we explored the provocation in the Wallaby space.

The process continued as we collaborated with Indigenous artist Jasmine who will be designing an artwork using the children's drawings and her own ideas to accompany the new philosophy.

The children first expressed on paper what was important to them at Elder Street then had the opportunity to add water colours to their drawings.

This was such a special journey to share with the children and we can't wait to see the finished product.

### CHILDREN'S VOICES

"When I see all of the Wallabies I feel happy and not nervous anymore" - Alba

"Seeing my friends and playing" - Lucy

"Playing with Henry" - Elliott

"I like coming to Elder Street" - Isla

"The bell that I see at school out the front" - Henry

"Painting" - Willow

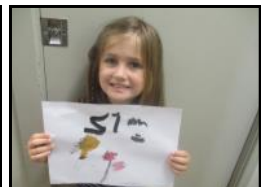
"When we play together it makes me feel calm. I feel excited when I get to play with my friends" - Lucinda

"Seeing the chicken" - Harriet

"Watering flowers in the garden" - Axl

"To help set stuff up and play with it" - Max. C

"I like packing away and that I'm good at helping" - Chloe. J



**MUSIC** - Music and songs are an important part of everyday life and educators welcome this input from families to give the children a connection between their home lives and their time at Elder Street. Families have been sharing some of their favourite songs with us and we have collaborated to create a Wallaby room playlist that embodies all of our favourite music genres.

The music on our playlist reflects the diversity of our room as we listen to such a variety of music. We often observe the children's faces light up when their music comes on and it has inspired many social interactions and dance sessions.

Love. Kate, Donna, Roxi, Emily, Olivia & Jena x

