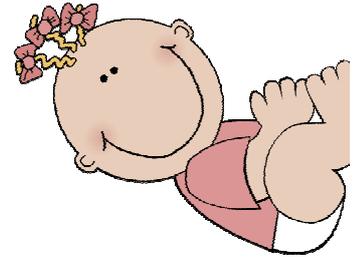




Meruka News – Issue 4, 2016

On Friday 2nd of December we had our annual Meruka Christmas Party at the Lower Eltham Park (Butterfly Park) we were lucky to have fantastic weather and it was a lovely night, thank you to all the families that attended. We were very lucky to have Santa arrive on the fire truck and he delivered some lovely books to the children.



All the Meruka educators and I would like to thank all the families for their continued support over the last 12 months. We would all like to wish the families that are moving on from Meruka the best of luck especially with children starting school and kinder in the New Year. We look forward to seeing you and your children again in 2017.

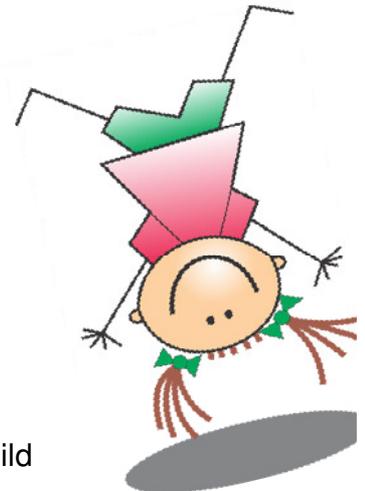
Meruka Reminders –

Christmas Closure –

The children's last day at Meruka will be Friday 23rd of December 2016.

It is important to remember that if this is your child's final year at Meruka and they do not attend on the last day they are booked in for you will NOT receive your child care benefit and child care rebate entitlements. This is only for the children not returning in 2017.

In 2017 the children's first day back is Monday 16th of January. Again it is important to remember that if it is your child's first year at Meruka if they do not attend on the first day they are booked in for you will not receive your child care benefit and child care rebate entitlements so it is important that they attend on their first day even if it is only for a short period of time.



Enrolment Packs –

Everyone should have now received an enrolment pack for 2017. Please remember this needs to be returned to Meruka before your child can attend on their first day back. We will also need updated copies of your child's immunisation records, and a new direct debit form needs to be completed.

2017 Educator changes -

As we look forward to 2017 we also say farewell to some of the Meruka educators who have chosen to venture on to some different career paths. Grace will be growing her own candle business, Teagan has landed a job with Lady Gowrie, Sarah Hill will be welcoming her 2nd child into her family and Lauren will begin the year with us but then will be moving to America to teach kinder over there. We wish them all the best of luck with their future plans.

Finally I would also like to thank all the fantastic educators Meruka has for all their hard work and dedication. I am so lucky to have such a fabulous team of dedicated and passionate staff. It's such a pleasure coming to work every day knowing I have a team that loves the work they do and they put their heart and soul into caring and educating all the children that attend the service.

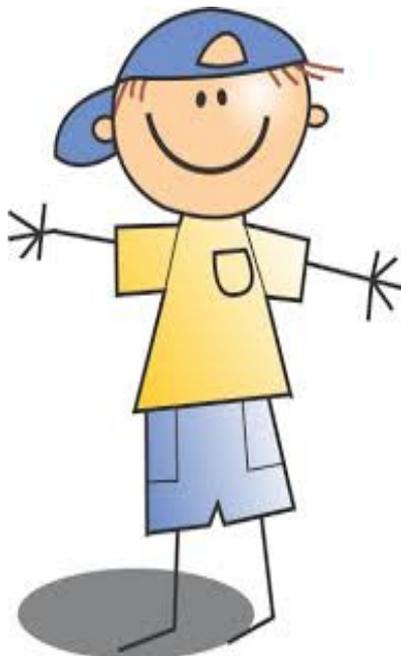
I would also like to thank all the 2016 Committee Members for all their hard work and support over the last 12 months it makes my job a lot easier knowing that I have the full support of the Committee.

Finally I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year. It has been a pleasure watching all the children grow and develop over the last 12 months and build strong relationships with all the children and families.

We will be saying goodbye to many families this year who will be moving on to school and kinder, we wish them all the very best for the future and it will be sad to see everyone go.

Many Thanks

Kylie Hammon



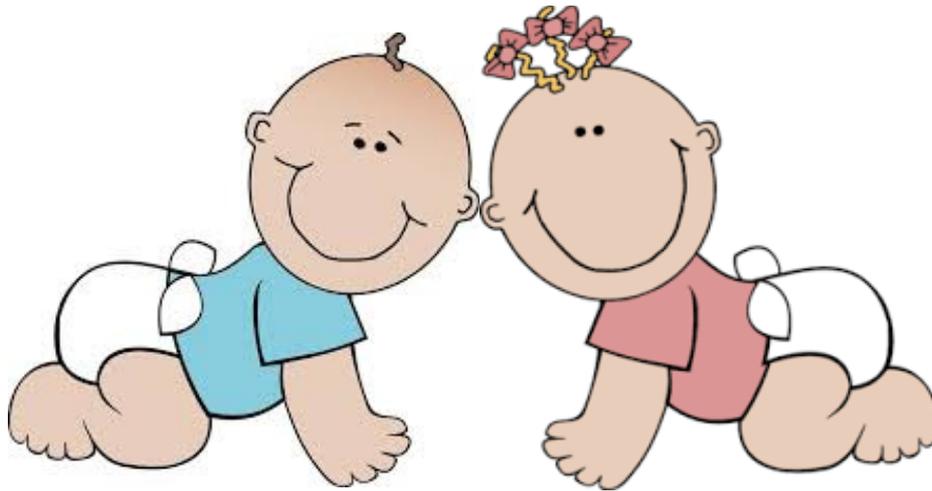
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday 23rd December

Last day at Meruka for 2016

Monday 16th January

First day at Meruka for 2017



BABIES ROOM REPORT

We would like to thank all the families and children for making this year enjoyable. The educators have enjoyed watching your children grow from infants into independent children.

The children leaving the babies room and going up to the toddler room are now ready. We have been working on their independent skills and development and each child has shown us that they are ready and are learning to dress and undress themselves, drinking from cups without lids, taking their plates and cups to the trolley when finished eating. The children staying with us next year have started sleeping on mattresses and sitting on chairs at the table for eating.

This term we have been sleeping outside more as we now have two big mozzie nets that the children sleep under. (Thank you to Frankie's family for hanging the rope up high for our nets to hang from). We have been making the most of the good weather and spending all day outside including eating outside.

The children's interests this term have been the dolls area, cars and we think their absolute favourite is books. There is not one part of their day that a child won't come up to an educator with a book and sit on our knee for us to read to them.

In term 3 we had some tropical fish join us in our Babies room and this has been exciting for the children to see them each morning and watch them throughout the day. Our guppies have now had three batches of "fry" (baby guppies) and the children watch and listen as we feed and care for and talk about the baby fish.

Outside we have noticed the bikes have been a strong interest. They have been having races around the yard with each other and we hear lots of laughs as they ride past.

All the educators in the Babies room would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

From the Babies Room Educators

Trisha, Leanne, Beth, Jo, Kathleen and Trudy



TODDLER ROOM REPORT

Hello Mums and Dads from the Toddler Room Staff,

This term we have been lucky to have lots of visitors and exciting things happening at Meruka! The children have enjoyed spending Monday mornings with Coach David engaging in different activities and practicing their fine and gross motor skills!

This term the children and staff once again went out into the bush on Thursday mornings. The children were always eager to put on their gumboots and fluoro vests and head out of the gates into the Meruka Parklands. Each week the children enjoyed discovering new and exciting things in their natural environment, such as plants, animals and insects.

Friday mornings we had the pleasure of Sophie coming in and running a yoga session with the children. The children would take their shoes off and sit on a round mat and get ready to move their bodies in different ways. The children would then lay down for some relaxation time before we sang some meditation songs to finish the session. This experience was highly enjoyed by many of the children and staff.

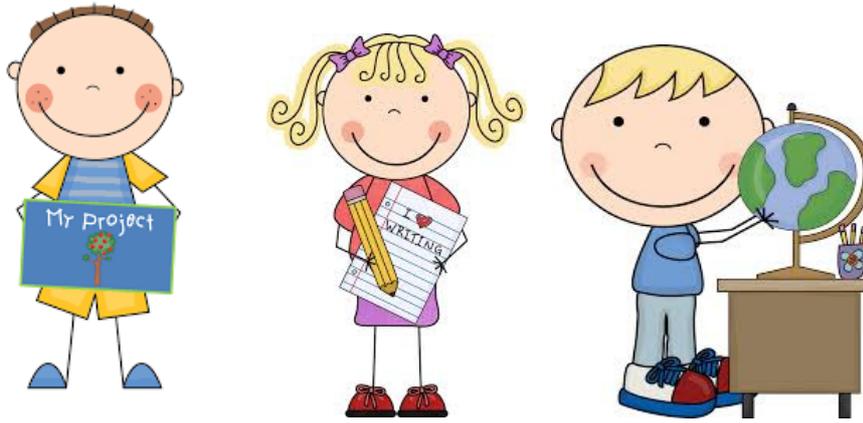
We have also had some great incursions this term! Farmer Will and all of his farm animals came to visit us. The children enjoyed getting up close to their favourite animal friends. The children also had a man Boori come into Meruka to share his aboriginal stories with us. The children enjoyed the interactive storytelling and had a dance along to the Didgeridoo as Boori showed us how to play it. Most recently the Reptile man came in to show and teach us about some reptiles that we might find here at Meruka Park. He brought along his blue tongue lizards, turtles, frogs, bearded dragons and a snake! To the educators surprise the children were most keen to touch the snake over the other reptiles!

As the year comes to an end we have had some areas that we have been focusing on more than others. The educators have been encouraging the children to serve their own food up at meal times. This aims to encourage the children's independence and self-help skills, particularly for those moving up to kinder next year. The children have been doing well at this and can now all scoop and serve their own lunches!

As we get closer to Christmas we have had a new friend join the Toddler Room, our new friendly elf! We have had discussions about what we should call him such as Dinosaur, Man, Nemo, Eltham, Princess and Charlie but the children have come up with so many good names we can't decide! The elf likes to move around the room when we aren't here, so the children enjoy coming in each day and searching for the cheeky elf!

The educators in the Toddler Room wish all families and children a very Merry Christmas and a safe break! See you next year!

Hannah, Rhonda, Claire, Peta, Sarah, Hollie, Carly and Rachael



KINDER ROOM REPORT

We have had such a big and fun filled term this term. We had the Hatch on the run program again this year where the children were able to watch baby chicks hatch and look after baby ducklings. We really enjoyed preparing a pond for the ducklings with a big tub and 2 big rocks, to help teach our ducklings how to swim. We loved giving them cuddles and learning more about them.

This term we also enjoyed Children's week, celebrating the joy of being a child! We did this with special days prepared for the children such as, Face paint day, cooking day, Dress up day and Pj day. We enjoyed a lot of activities and even had a Disco for the kinder children, which was a great success.

Our bush kinder program was amazing! The children learnt a lot about the outdoors and really enjoyed exploring our surroundings and climbing amongst the trees. To stress the importance of safety in the bush we invited Mark the snake hunter to talk to the kinders. He brought in his reptiles and taught us about the creatures we might find around Meruka. We were able to hold the animals and learnt what to do if we ever came face to face with these creatures.

Monty Boori came for a visit to Meruka on a Friday and told us stories about his indigenise culture. He played his didgeridoo for the children and explained that "the didgeridoo was once a house for termites and ants, the first time a didgeridoo is played, those termites and ants are blown up into the sky and dance amongst the stars." The children were able to dance and learn how the didgeridoo is played. We had so much fun with Boori at Meruka.

Within the preschool room this term we have been busy preparing the children for school. To do this we have been making sandwiches and snacks with them each day and packing a lunch box for them to practice eating out of. So each day we have a picnic in the preschool room and talk about their expectations for school.

Also in preparation for school, we walked to a local primary school with the Wednesday children and met with the preps to complete an activity together. We were so proud of the preschoolers who joined in and made friends through the experience.

We can't believe it is already the end of the year and we are going to be saying goodbye to our big preschool children. They have learnt so much and we have had so much fun together in our Meruka family. We want to wish them all the best as they embark on their new adventure to their big schools and know their futures will be bright.

Caz, Christie, Lauren, Maddie and Teagan