



Kōwhai Area News

DEAR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Kia ora koutou katoa

Welcome to the final term of 2023! We hope you had a great holiday break and were able to spend some time outdoors with the improving weather. Included in this newsletter are a few of the things we will be involved in this term. To our new students and their families, we extend a warm welcome to our school community. With the weather still not quite settled, we ask that all children continue to bring a light and waterproof jacket each day. Being a summer term, we do recognise that we will have some hotter days also, so a reminder that your child will need to keep their sunhat at school to wear at lunchtimes for their safety and protection from the sun.

CURRICULUM AND INQUIRY

We will continue this term with our overarching concept of 'Power'. A reminder that the 'Big Ideas' we have been relating our learning to this year are:

- There is power in learning
- Power can be good or bad
- Power is everywhere
- Power changes

Religious Education

As we prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ, we will be learning more about how to follow in the footsteps of Jesus through our teaching of the Saints. The children will have an in depth look at who the Saints are and what makes them Saints. They will learn about Holiness and how we know people are Holy.

The children will also learn about the liturgical colours of Advent and Christmas as well as the importance of preparation for a special day like Christmas where we welcome Jesus into our lives just like our whanau welcomed us! The stories of Jesus' life throughout the year have all helped in our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus through our school values.

The Arts

This term, we are going to focus on The Arts. Through music, dance, art and drama the children will bring stories to life, engage in new, exciting activities and most importantly have fun sharing new skills. The children will explore various materials, create works of visual art and develop an understanding as to the ways in which art can communicate, entertain and communicate big ideas.

Understanding the Curriculum

Supporting Early Mathematics

It is important for children to understand that being good at Maths is more than getting things right and knowing the answer immediately. It is important to build children's confidence and ability to strive, explore, and work in different ways. At school we design learning that helps strengthen the children's confidence and ability to explore and work in different ways. We encourage you to praise your child not just for the right answer but for asking questions, making mistakes, taking risks and investigating real life problems. At home you can reinforce this as you explore maths together.

What can you do to support your child's early mathematics development at home?

- Have fun with numbers

Ideas to try: As you go for a walk read the numbers on the letterboxes; predict which number comes next; notice and talk about odd and even numbers.

How does exploring numbers support early mathematics? A fundamental understanding of how our numbers fit together is essential for addition and subtraction, then later on multiplication and division.

- Play Games together

Ideas to try: Playing board and other counting games helps your child to develop number sense. They serve as an early introduction to making numbers bigger and smaller through addition and subtraction. Dice, cards and dominoes are fantastic tools to use.

- Involve your child in cooking; this is an ideal time to learn about fractions, sequencing, temperature, weight and capacity.
- Explore patterns in nature, in architecture and in books. Be curious; try repeating them or making your own.
- Name shapes and make pictures from shapes.
- Draw treasure maps then write directions to find the treasure.



Supporting Early Literacy (taken from an article written by Amanda White, prepared for the Education Hub)

Literacy is the way that we communicate with each other using symbol systems. This includes reading and writing as well as a number of other ways of communicating such as drawing or using our bodies to create and convey meaning. Literacies vary in different cultures and languages, and children learn to communicate in ways that reflect their family and their culture. The development

of literacy begins from birth, well before children formally learn to read, write or experience other forms of media. Parents, siblings and other family members play a very important role in helping their children to develop literacy through everyday activities at home.

What can you do to support your child's early literacy development at home?

- **Play together**

Join in play with your child, following the things that they are interested in – this will vary for different ages but all children (even young babies) will indicate their preferences. Involve other family members at home with you too.

Ideas to try: Young children of all ages love activities like bubbles, playdoh, hide and seek, ball games, building with Lego or empty boxes, dramatic role play (such as dress-ups, shopping, being a doctor), and pretend play (such as playing with small toy dolls, animals or cars).

How does playing together support early literacy? Through interactive play, young children learn about listening, taking turns and expressing themselves using their bodies, gestures, facial expressions, words, and printed pictures or words – these are all symbolic forms of communication that support literacy! Pretend play and dramatic role play provide children with the opportunity to take on roles and make up stories, linking characters to actions or events as their stories unfold in the play.

- **Stop and listen**

Encourage your child to stop and listen to the sounds in their environment while you play and interact together.

Ideas to try: Stop what you are doing every so often for at least 10 seconds and ask your child to listen – what can you hear? You can do this while you are inside or out for a walk. You might hear traffic noises, people talking, the wind, someone mowing the lawns, birds singing, music playing...

How does listening support early literacy? Being able to locate and identify environmental sounds in the presence of other background noise is a playful way of introducing the notion of listening to sounds in words. Listening and speech sound awareness are a key building block for literacy, particularly for reading and spelling.

- **Sing songs and rhymes**

Engage in songs, rhymes and poems together – this is an activity that is free and available anytime, anywhere, and needs no additional equipment although you can use props if you want to!

Ideas to try: Young children particularly enjoy actions song and rhymes with silly noises, words and lots of repetition. Examples are 'Willoughby, wallaby woo', 'A Slippery Fish', 'There was an old lady who swallowed a fly', or 'Old MacDonald' – you can Google these and others! Make up actions or funny voices/noises and make it fun.

How do songs and rhymes support early literacy? Songs and rhymes are not only enjoyable, but they also support early literacy by providing children with opportunities to listen and express themselves using rhythm, rhyme, gestures, sounds and words.

- **Telling and reading stories**

Stories are one of the most common and well-loved forms of literacy that benefit children socially, emotionally and academically. The sharing of stories with young not only includes reading books, but also stories that can be told, sung or acted out.

Ideas to try: Talk with your child about stories of everyday things they have experienced, using photos or videos if you have saved them on your phone or camera (for example, 'Do you remember yesterday when we walked to the beach? Look at all the shells you found...'). Tell true or made-up

stories with your child as the main character. Many songs contain stories too, such 'The other day I met a bear' or 'Little Bunny Foo Foo' (you can Google these too). Find books that you and your child enjoy reading together – this might be picture books, lift-the-flap books, Dr Seuss-style rhyming books, books about characters or even your family photo albums.

How do stories support early literacy? Telling stories and reading books together not only allows for snuggling up together and bonding but can also enhance children's listening, imagination, language comprehension and use, as well as their print awareness (understanding the conventions associated with books like reading from left to right) and their understanding of narrative (or how stories are structured).

- **Have conversations about everyday things**

Make the most of the opportunities to communicate with your child that are present during every day routines and activities at home and in your immediate environment.

Ideas to try: Mealtimes, bedtimes, bath times and getting dressed or changed are all regular routines that provide opportunities for communicating with your child (such as 'Time for a bath', 'Turn on the taps', 'Time to hop in!'). Outings like a walk to the park also offer a lot of opportunities to talk about what you see ('Let's go down the hill', 'Look at the big bus!', 'Can you see the fluffy black dog?').

Comment about what is happening, adapting your language to what you feel your child can understand. Use your body language, actions and tone of voice to help emphasise key words as you communicate together. Watch and listen carefully so you don't miss your child's efforts to take part in the conversation. Don't do all the talking – expect that they will take turns too!

How do everyday conversations support early literacy? Conversations allow opportunities for children learn the meanings of words, as well as how to use those words within familiar, meaningful situations that involve them. A child's vocabulary (the words that they can understand and use) is one of the key building blocks for literacy to develop. Happy reading!



Click [here](#) to find out more about Maths and Literacy at home.

Coming up this term

School photos – Wednesday 1 November (classes) and Friday 3 November (individual)

All Soul's Day School Mass – Thursday 2 November, 9:30am

Celebration of Culture – Thursday 16 November

New Entrant Welcome and Blessing – Friday 1 December, 9:15am in the church. This will be our final Blessing for the year.

Kowhai Christmas Story – Wednesday 13th December, 1:30pm. You may notice a change in the time this year. With the wonderful turnout of family members to our open afternoons, we have gone with this earlier time. As the term comes to an end, we are mindful of how tired our younger children become and we appreciate that an evening celebration makes for a very long day for our students. Please join us in the church as Kowhai retells the Christmas Story through the Arts.

Sharing of Learning this term – *please check your child's book bag for the learning they will be sharing with you this term. You can expect to see evidence of Writing in week 3, Health in week 5, Maths in week 6 and The Arts in week 10. You will receive an email closer to the time to remind you to look out for these pieces of work.*