

Portobelo Avonhead Newsletter

What has been happening recently at Portobelo Avonhead?

Welcome, to the spring edition of the Portobelo newsletter.

The Christmas session is fast approaching, and we have started planning our roster so our wonderful teachers can have a much deserved break. By now you would have all received a copy of the Christmas Booking Form. Can you please have these back no later 30th of October. If you require another copy please see Vanessa, Heather or Amber.

We are thrilled to announce that we have a new teacher Chantel who has started working in the preschool. Chantel is qualified early childhood teacher from Australia and will be working from 9.00am – 5.30pm daily. Chantel is originally from Melbourne Australia and has moved to New Zealand with her partner. In Chantel's spare time she enjoys spending time in the outdoors, camping, walking, and trying out new craft ideas. You may also have noticed we have a new reliever teacher Kayla who joined the team a few weeks ago and has been working in both the nursery and preschool rooms. Kayla was working in her previous role for a couple of years and will be working most days in the preschool supporting the team. Kayla enjoys spending time with friends and family and exploring the great outdoors. We are so excited to have both Chantel and Kayla as part of the Portobelo whānau and are excited to for all they will bring to our tamariki and learning environment.

I will be away on annual leave from Monday 16th of November and return on Tuesday 24th of November. While I am away, we are unable to make changes to bookings. Therefore, please ensure any booking change requests are given to me prior to the morning of the 13th of November. During my absence Heather can assist you with any other queries.

Nga Mihi, Vanessa (Centre Leader)



News from the Nursery ...

Kia Ora and welcome to Spring! Recently in the Portobelo Nursery we have wrapped up our project focussing on 'Friendships' and have transitioned into a new project focussing on 'Our Human Body'. This focus came about after the nursery Kaiako observed a developing shared interest among the children as they label different body part and explore their five senses.

The 'Our Human Body' project has so far encompassed the Te Whāriki goals of Exploration, Well-being and Belonging as we explore how healthy eating and physical movement can benefit our bodies. We have engaged our tamariki (children) in a fun soccer game thanks to Maria's whānau interest in the sport, as well as exploring different ways of preparing healthy food such making fruit kebabs. Hand washing and bathing our baby dolls in warm soapy water gave tamariki the opportunity to participate in healthy hygiene routines in an exciting and abstract way.

Through the sensory elements of playdough, slime, paint, and water play the children have been encouraged to be creative and to test their five senses through using a trial and error strategy, while also developing working theories about the world around them.

During the month of September, we celebrated Māori Language week which saw us connecting with our roots through experiences that engaged children with significant Māori landmarks around Aotearoa. For example, we recreated the Waimakariri river in our sandpit, visited the head of the Avon river which is right here in our Avonhead community, and also recreated Aoraki (Mt Cook) in our sandpit, complete with a snowy peak! Each of these experiences developed our understanding of Te Ao Māori (the world of Māori) and Te Reo Māori.



News from the Preschool ...

A common inquiry within our learning environment over recent weeks has involved our sensory world and the many different textures that can activate our senses. Last week our tamariki had the opportunity to investigate 'sensory bags' that were filled with paint, water, oil and other objects that created different feels and textures. One inquiry discovered that sparked particular joy was the different effects of drawing a shape with a finger, and then with a fingertip – the amazing discoveries our children can find with open-ended play!

The realm of storytelling has also been popular – with Kaiako reading to our tamariki, as well as our tamariki reading to each other! As Kaiako facilitate these experiences, many of our tamariki have explored their own voices within storytelling, as they acquire puppets, props, and animals to support their experience. It has been very exciting to see our tamariki explore this social world of speaking in front of a group, leadership, and the many ways that language and communication can be engaging and fun! Story telling brings so much joy to our world!

As tamariki and Kaiako witness the changes in the weather, our preschool room has naturally explored what this means for our outside environment; the changes to our trees, leaves and plants, the bugs and insects that are coming out to play and the general focus of regrowth and rebirth. This has allowed many opportunities for insect hunt expeditions, clearing out weeds in the garden, and planting new seeds. This enables Kaiako and tamariki to naturally explore the values of kaitiakitanga and whanaungatanga through governing and partnership.

We are excited for the new adventures and fun to come. 😊



Welcome and Farewells

Welcome to the Nursery: Ava, Blake, Georgia, Cleo and Zaaya

Welcome to the Preschool: Zoe, Poppy, Logan, Angus, Alyssa, Cassandra Ariea and Allie

Farewell to our Preschool Graduates: Ariana Y and Alice. You all take our best Portobelo wishes with you to school - the next exciting step in your learning journey.

Upcoming events/parent and Whānau Notices:

Calendar Events coming up

Show week 11th -16th of November

Diwali 12th -17th of November

Get outdoor week 14th -22nd November

Public Holidays coming up

Portobelo Avonhead will be closed the following days

***Labour Day Monday 26th of October
Canterbury anniversary day Friday 13th of November***

Booking Changes

The 'Change of enrolled hours' form is now on our website www.bestpreschools.co.nz. If you need to change your child's booking, you can download the form, complete it and scan it through to Vanessa (Centre Leader) at avonheadportobelo@xtra.co.nz. Please remember that requests must be made at least a week in advance, so we can change our rostered staffing to ensure we meet legal requirements

Vacancies

We have vacancies in the preschool and nursery room available now. Having an extra day is great for you to have some much needed you time or get those jobs done that you never quite get to. We have a range of sessions to suit your family's needs.

Please Let Vanessa know if you would like to take advantage of this unique time.

Contacting us...

Just a reminder of our Nursery and Preschool cell phone numbers, so that you can text us. Use a text to let us know if your child is going to be absent for the day, if you want to check on how your child's day is going, or for any other non-urgent messages.

Our Nursery number is **027 361 8181** and the Preschool number is **027 455 6990**.

We also update our Facebook page regularly with photos of our children's learning, so you can keep other family members 'in the loop'. This is where we post up to date information about the Centre in the event of an emergency, so 'like' us on FB now!

A note from Fleur Milne (Principal Leader)...

Kia ora whānau,

I am loving all things spring at the moment, and in particular seeing the wonder and joy in our tamariki as they explore all that this season brings.

This morning I was reading through an Early Childhood Education magazine and stumbled upon an article by playscape designer Rusty Keeler entitled 'Saying Yes to Play'. Rusty so beautifully sums up why we at Portobelo are so passionate about play and particularly outdoors, risky play. I will share an excerpt below....

"Think back to your own childhood. Where was your favourite place to play? What are some of your memories of that place and what did you do there? Were you an explorer? A builder? A risk-taker? A mess maker? Were you a free range kid? Did you do things your parents didn't know about?"

Through my work designing natural playscapes for young children I hear all sorts of inspired stories from adults about where and how they played as kids. 'We were always down in the creek looking for frogs and skipping stones.' 'We played by the railroad tracks.' 'We built our own forts and made our own play.' We played outside in the neighbourhood until the street lights came on.' I am always happy and honoured to hear these stories. They remind me of my own free ranging childhood. But then I ask some of those adults if their children play that way today and the answer is sadly often no. And if I ask them if they would let their children play like they did as kids people say, "no way!"

Yes, times have changed since a lot of us were kids. There are definitely more pressures on children, families and schools for safety and success, and so many things competing for our children's time and attention. We all want the best for our kids and to keep them safe from injury. But in doing so have we become over-protective? Many people say today's children have become too sheltered and limited in what they are free to do. Shouldn't they be allowed to just play?

Through play children learn, create, imagine, communicate, collaborate, try new skills, make new friends, discover who they are and what they love. Play is the natural way children grow and develop their brains

and bodies. It's hard-wired, built in, beautiful, and fun. Children need opportunities to run, dig, climb, build, make a mess, even fall down and get a scratch. It's true. It's ok. Children need the chance to take risks and try things they've never done before. Fail. Succeed! We can only truly learn by doing for ourselves."

I sat in a room filled with local primary and high school teachers yesterday and we discussed the importance of play as a tool for discovery, collaboration, establishing working theories, developing communication, developing empathy, developing social awareness. It became apparent that true, deep learning happens when children of any age are provided with space to have a go, take a risk, work it out with space and support. To play! I am so proud of the way our Kaiako here at Portobelo embrace this way of teaching. It is challenging as a teacher (or a parent) to provide space for tamariki to truly direct their own journey, to let them explore and experiment in ways that we probably wouldn't, however we firmly believe that this is the best way to instil a life-long passion for learning in our tamariki.

Wishing you all a joy-filled spring,
Nga mihi
Fleur

'Ko te ahurei o te tamaiti arahia o tātou mahi'
Let the uniqueness of the child guide your work