At our 2012 AGM, our Director, Elissa Stafford presented a wonderful collection of images, which showed how children learn through play.

Her message was an important one: our play-based curriculum allows children a diverse range of opportunities to develop necessary skills to help them on their way towards school readiness. We do not conduct formal literacy or numeracy lessons, we are not a school, but we do provide children with abundant opportunity to practice problem solving, explore science concepts, negotiate, communicate, develop curiosity, build self-esteem and work with words, letters and numbers – all skills they will take with them on their school journey.

Your decision to enroll your child in a play-based program at SKPS is absolutely the right one. Research shows us that children in playful classrooms acquire literacy skills and concepts of a higher level and develop more advanced language and social skills.

A full copy of Elissa’s presentation will soon be available on our website for you to read. We can happily recommend further reading if you are interested in learning more.
Welcome to the end of 2012! It has been a wonderful year and we are so grateful to all of our families for helping to make it so. There are just a few last things before I say goodbye for this year.

We had a reasonable turn out at our AGM and information night. Thanks to those who attended. We hope you gained some valuable knowledge about our program and service.

Our sensory garden project has moved forward, with the delivery of the concept drawings from our landscape designer last week. The final product will be on display next year, when the digging and planting will begin in earnest. We think the concept looks wonderful and are very excited about seeing it come to life, but would also appreciate any feedback. There will be an opportunity for this in 2013.

I would really love to wish Emma, Maize and Cam all the very best for the arrival of their precious baby bundle next year. We are so happy for you.

The end of the year is often the end of an era for lots of families. If they are sending their first child from kinder to school, or saying goodbye to kinder after a long association when the youngest leaves to go into prep, it can be an exciting but sometimes overwhelming time.

We are often so busy, too, that we forget to take some time to recognise the significance of the transition and what it means, not only for our little people, but also for ourselves. So in the next couple of weeks, take 5 minutes to think about what the end of 2012 means for you: what you are saying goodbye to and what you will be welcoming in the new year; how you and yours have grown and changed, their achievements – through success or failure – the friendships that have blossomed, the bodies that are different now to when they ran through the waves last summer, the teeth that have been lost! Take the time now to remember these things, because soon the time will be gone and it will be harder to remember them – and they are precious.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

Mel Shanahan
Our 3-year-old groups have had a wonderful last term in 2012. Animals and the beauty of nature were explored closely at kinder. We watched the life cycles of silkworms, witnessed ducklings hatching out of their eggs and even had a quick look at some tadpoles.

These hands on experiences resulted in the children being inspired to create many artworks depicting worms, caterpillars and birds. We have also had a lovely time with Christmas craft and copious amounts of glitter!

It has been fantastic to see all the progression the children have made this year. We witnessed children gain interpersonal skills, independence, language enhancement as well as physical development. Friendships blossomed and many children began looking out for special people each kinder session.

Another pleasing area of achievement was the group’s communication abilities. Confidence, clarity and knowledge of words were enhanced through songs, texts and conversations with both peers and educators. We took great pride watching children express themselves in front of the whole group to express their opinion or share an experience at group time. Watching all the children take part in our ‘concert’ was definitely a highlight!

Sharing and co-operative skills were also developed throughout this last term. Children had opportunities to work and learn in partnerships, small groups and together as one group. Thus helping to pave the way for successful entry to 4-year-old kinder. We wish our beautiful Cockatoos and Lorikeets all the best for next year.
KOOKABURRAS – Elissa & Dawn

It’s hard to believe how fast this term has gone! The children who started with us at the beginning of the year have blossomed into curious and capable learners, ready to take on their next challenge. It’s been a wonderful journey, watching the children learn with such enthusiasm and energy. We will certainly miss our Kookaburras as they embrace their school years. For the children returning we welcome you back and look forward to a wonderful new year filled with many more great learning opportunities.

The children have explored many topics of interest this term and have had the opportunity to participate in many lovely experiences including: a visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens to learn about traditional Aboriginal customs, watching ducklings emerge from their eggs, silk worms weave cocoons and turn into moths, sunflower seeds sprout in their little handmade paper pots. The Kookaburras also invited their Grandparents or special friends to a morning tea to celebrate Children’s week.

We have recently been discussing written letters and the many ways we can communicate with people. We received an email from the children at Hobsons Bay Kindergarten and responded to the email. We discussed how fast you can receive an electronic letter. We have also discussed the postal system and how a letter reaches your letterbox. This has been a nice follow on from looking at different print, text in a book, what symbols represent and various ways in which we communicate. We recently sent a letter to either our families or to Santa, which we posted at our local post box in Vernon Street, followed by greeting our local community and stopping at the Famous Blue Raincoat for a baby chino. These experiences are very important aspects of becoming an effective communicator.

The children did an amazing job at the concert, with everyone participating and having a great time. It was great to see so many family members at kinder and joining in the celebrations.

We would like to thank all parents who have been wonderful and supportive throughout the year. To our Kookaburra children, we will miss you and wish you the very best as you absorb the new challenges in your new adventures.

Kids Disco

What an amazing turn out at this year’s Disco! Thank you to all families who came along and joined in the frivolity. The children had a fabulous time dancing and playing.

Congratulations to Crystal Tyson and family who were very lucky on the night, winning a number of gorgeous hampers.

Our special thanks to Jody and Charmaine who organised such a wonderful event – your efforts are appreciated!
ROSELLAS – Emma & Dawn

We are finding it hard to believe the year is over already – as they say, time flies when you are having fun! This is what we have been up to...

Our excursion to The Botanical Gardens gave the children a greater understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture in particular the local Kulin Nation. Through the storybook ‘You and me Murrawee’ the children explored indigenous plants in the Children’s Garden, collected plant treasures and learnt about Aboriginal tools. Experiences included grinding and painting with ochre, meeting Waa (the Raven) and making a belonging handprint to take home. The Indigenous program allowed each child to be welcomed by a Tanderrum ceremony and meet an Indigenous guide whilst learning about sustainable use of resources and biodiversity.

We had Grand friends Day during Term 4, which was fantastic. The room was buzzing with excitement as proud children showed proud grand friends around the room. This was a wonderful opportunity for Grandparents or special family friends to visit the kinder room and enjoy some morning tea.

We have had the duck-hatching program which was again a success and the children watched in anticipation as the eggs began to crack open and new little ducklings emerged. The children enjoyed watching them as they grew and they were able to handle them and watch as they ran around in new homes the children built for them. The silk worm’s lifecycle has been another great learning experience for the children throughout the term. The children have watched the many changes involved as they hatched from tiny eggs and changed again and again to finally emerge as a little white moth, ready to start the process all over again.

All the children have been participating in their school orientation programs to help with the transition to school process. We have heard lots of positive feedback from the children about where they will go to school in 2013 and what it is all about. Most are excited, and a few overwhelmed by how big the school really is and the fact that school will be 5 days a week! We have seen a few school uniforms worn by some of the children and they are so proud!

As Christmas looms upon us, the children are gearing up for Santa’s arrival. We have been very busy participating in a variety of Christmas craft activities to bring in the festive season and to help decorate the room. We are most looking forward to our end-of-year concert to be held on the 18th of December. The children are excitedly practicing a number of songs to present to their parents and carers. We look forward to seeing you at 6pm.

To end, we would like to say a huge thank you to all our beautiful children and their families for a wonderful and enriching year. As always the end of the year is a sad time as we say goodbye to the children we have nurtured and fostered throughout the year. They have developed into little people full of confidence, ready to take on bigger things in their new learning journey. We are very proud of the achievements they have made and we have once again loved watching the changes and growth in each child. We have learnt so much from them all, while having lots of fun in the process.

We wish you all the very best in the future and hope you remember your kinder year as a happy and memorable one. We welcome you back to visit if you are passing by.

Have a happy and safe holiday season.
Fundraising Report

Our major events for the end of the year, the Obstacle Course Challenge and the Disco were a terrific success. The children put on their running shoes and did a mad dash around the park, over the climbing frames and through tunnels to complete the obstacle course challenge. Thank you to all parents, grandparents and friends who joined in the fun and cheered on their little ones as they ran the circuit.

Plenty of fun was also had at the Disco. We loved seeing so many of the children doing their very own “Gangnam Style” moves on the dance floor! Thank you for your support.

It was so exciting to finally receive our picture plates. They looked amazing – we certainly have some talented young artists in our midst. Our tea towels also arrived this week and they look fantastic. Thank you also to the parents who supported SKPS by ordering from our Toy Catalogues!

This year we have raised over $4000 and we have put that money towards new shelving in the storeroom, room dividers, a BBQ cover and a projection screen.

Christmas Countdown

The children have had a fabulous time in lead up to Christmas, decorating the kinder room and practicing a collection of special songs for their end-of-year concerts.

It is a very exciting time, with lots of talk about parties, Christmas trees, and candy cane. Some children even have Christmas cards appearing in their pockets from their friends.

From our SKPS family to yours, we wish you a very merry and safe Christmas. We look forward to seeing our returning families in the New Year and we send our best wishes to departing families.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
GRAND FRIENDS DAY

Grandparents and important grand friends came back to kindergarten as part of the South Kingsville Pre School’s Grand friends Day.

The children invited their grandparents and older friends to join them for morning tea as part of the kindergarten’s Children’s Week celebrations.

Some grandparents and grand friends are regulars at the kindergarten but many of them have never seen what the children do at kinder. It was a lovely opportunity to invite them in and share some of the activities.

In line with the Children’s Week theme --- A Caring World Shares – the SKPS Grand friends Day acknowledged the important part played by grandparents and older friends in children’s lives.

(Picture: Darcie Brown & her grandparents)

Website Updates

We have recently added a number of new “Testimonials” taken from our 2012 Parent Survey. We love receiving positive feedback! We have also updated our fee schedule and timetable for 2013. Over the holidays, we will be adding some new, exciting features to our website, we look forward to sharing these with you in the New Year.

Keep your eye on our Policies Page. The committee has been working tirelessly to review and adopt a number of new policies to meet the new National Quality Standard Laws and Regulations introduced at the start of this year. Some of the new policies include: Emergency Evacuation, Interactions with Children, Child Safe Environment and Staffing Policies. There is a policy folder in the parent library and in the kinder office if you cannot find the policy you are interested in on the website.

The website is the first place to look for breaking news about program events, new policies and enrolments. Speaking of enrolments, don’t forget that enrolments for 3-year-old kinder in 2014 opened on June 1st 2012. Don’t miss out on a place! Download the Registration Form from the website TODAY!

SUNFLOWERS

We have been discussing and watching Life Cycles at Kinder. We have watched our silk worms change from little black dots into wriggling silkworms into cocoons and finally change into moths. We have watched eggs hatch into ducklings and along the way we have read books and looked at posters relating to these amazing cycles.

Our latest experience has been making a pot out of newspaper and planting a Sunflower seed. We have been busy watering and waiting for the stems to appear. The children were most excited about taking these home to plant in the garden!
We are very proud of the improvements we have made in 2012! Thank you and congratulations to the staff, committee members and parent helpers who have contributed their time, energy and skills.

- A NEW EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
- Improved communication/ICT services: parent group emails, website development, electronic newsletter, online parent survey
- Sensory Garden design
- Policy development
- Comprehensive staff appraisal process
- New equipment: colour printer, Ipad, projector screen
- Indoor & outdoor storage solutions
- Collaborative relationships with local kindergartens
- New program planning strategies
- Environmental/sustainability initiatives
- Increased number of incursions/excursions
- Review & update of our first aid kits
- Staff Professional Development on Child Protection & Diabetes
- Strategies to increase parent involvement
- Strategies to ensure children are engaged in play

COMING SOON!

We have spent some of our fundraising money to purchase a rainbow play stand and arch.

During the process of developing our Quality Improvement Plan, one of the elements was to “provide for each child’s comfort and...meet each child’s need for...rest and relaxation”. We hope to improve our “quiet” space where children can rest, engage in quiet play and read books by purchasing this gorgeous rainbow arch to create a more intimate setting.

It has finally arrived, so now we just have to assemble it! We hope to have it set up for the first day of kinder next year!
We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the members of this year’s Committee of Management. Your contributions, big and small, make the world of difference to the quality of our service. Your enthusiasm and dedication is greatly appreciated. We say goodbye to the committee members who are leaving us and we welcome the new group of parents who are joining the ranks. We look forward to 2013, making new friends and making more improvements to our wonderful Pre School.

BOTANICAL GARDENS EXCURSION

This excursion gave the children a greater understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture, in particular the local Kulin nation. Through the storybook ‘You and Me Murrawee’, children explored indigenous plants in the Children’s Garden, collected plant treasures and observed how to use Aboriginal tools.

The children got involved in grinding and painting with ochre, they met Waa the Raven and made a belonging handprint to take home. The children were welcomed by a traditional Tanderrum ceremony which involved burning the leaves wattle, cherry ballart and river red gum. Everyone got involved using clapping sticks and stamping their feet to the rhythm of the didgeridoo.
Goodbye & Good luck
EMMA!

We take this opportunity to say goodbye to Emma and wish her all the best for the safe arrival of her second child. We look forward to Emma visiting us during the year and introducing us to her new baby. We thank her for her enthusiasm and outstanding work with the children in Rosellas this year.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If your child has a medical condition such as asthma, anaphylaxis or diabetes for example, we can provide you with resources and support to help you manage the condition. Please see your child’s educator if you would like more information.

Healthy Choices for Children

Hobsons Bay City Council would like to engage the community and the local food industry in a program of providing healthy choices for children when eating out, eating at school or daycare or eating at home.

Learn more about the Healthy Choices for Children program and check out the tasty recipes at [www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Community/Healthy_and_wellbeing/](http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Community/Healthy_and_wellbeing/)

Does your child have a favourite dish that is high in fibre, low in salt, sugar and fat? Hobsons Bay City Council would love your suggestions for healthy choices. Please send to publichealth@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

DUCKLINGS

The children thoroughly enjoyed watching the ducklings hatch from their eggs and grow over a period of 2 weeks. Some children got to lend a hand, removing pieces of the shell. It was a very exciting time in the kinder room. The children produced gorgeous feathery creations!
Water Safety

Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children aged 0-14 years in Victoria. In 2009/2010 there were 10 drowning deaths of children aged 0-14 years in Victoria; double the number of deaths observed in 2008/2009.

Infants and toddlers are the group most at risk of drowning, with 7 drowning deaths in 2009/2010 occurring in Victorian children aged 0-4 years. Compounding this figure is data demonstrating that in this age group, there are 7 non-fatal incidents for every drowning death. Non-fatal drowning incidents often result in permanent brain damage and disability.

The home environment is the most common location for childhood drowning, with the majority of incidents occurring in backyard swimming pools and spas.

Why children are at risk?
Children like to explore their environments; they are naturally attracted to water and have little fear or understanding of the dangers that it poses.

Children can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water, therefore it is essential that access is restricted by safety barriers, and that they are constantly supervised around water. Toddler pools, backyard ponds, bathtubs, the washing machine, buckets of water and even pet drinking bowls must be recognised as potential drowning hazards.

Prevention:
Kidsafe recommends that parents and carers take the following precautions to reduce the risk of childhood drowning:

Supervise:
- Active Supervision involves parents and carers keeping an eye on children at all times. Do not expect older children to look after their younger siblings. Children have short attention spans and can be easily distracted.
- Remain within arms reach. This will ensure that you can get to the child in time if something does go wrong.
- Take children with you if you leave the water area.

Reduce the Hazard:
- Restrict children’s access to water through safety barriers such as pool fencing.
- Remove hazards such as pot plants and chairs well away from pool fences to avoid children climbing on to them and over the fence.

Do not prop any doors or gates open that allow children access to a body of water.
- Create a safe play area to separate your child from bodies of water such as swimming pools and dams. This is especially important on farms and larger properties.

Knowledge
- Water familiarisation lessons can assist in teaching children to swim while also helping them understand water safety.
- Enrol in a resuscitation course and update skills annually so you are able to respond in case of an emergency.
- Resuscitation posters are a good reminder to keep around pools and spas.

You can also complete pool safety checklists (from national RLSSA website - www.royallifesaving.com.au). Please conduct this annually, as weather conditions and general wear and tear can affect your gate.