



Belford Oaks Community Children's Centre

Newsletter

Term 1, 2025

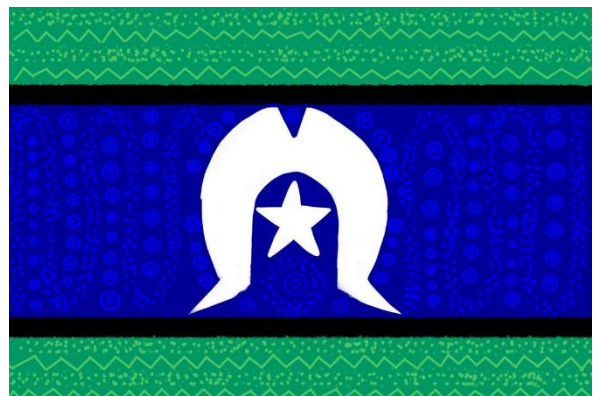
Acknowledgement to Country

Belford Oaks acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we play, grow and learn,
The Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation.

We pay our respects to Elders, past present and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions,
culture and the hope of Indigenous Australians.

In the words of the children:

We Acknowledge Country everyday with,
Hands up,
Hands down,
We all stand on Wurundjeri Ground.



To the Belford Oaks community

As we wrap up another exciting and enriching term here at Belford Oaks, we're thrilled to share with you the wonderful experiences, milestones, and activities that have made this term so special for our little learners. From creative art projects to new friendships and exciting adventures, it's been a joy to watch the children grow and explore the world around them.

In this edition, we'll highlight some of the key moments from the term, share upcoming events, and offer a glimpse into what we have planned for the next few months. We hope you enjoy reading about your child's journey and the positive impact of our vibrant community.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to another term filled with learning,
laughter, and growth!



A message from the director

We are excited to welcome all of our new families to the Belford Oaks community! Whether you're joining us for the first time or returning, we're thrilled to have you with us. Our community is built on the strength of our families, and we can't wait to see the unique contributions you will bring.

As you settle in, please know that we are here to support you. From events and activities to resources and connections, we want to help make your transition as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Please keep an eye out for upcoming events and opportunities to get involved in this and future newsletters

Once again, welcome! We're so happy to have you as part of our family.

Also, a big welcome to Olga, Mele and Huitong who have all recently become valued members of the Belford Oaks team. You will find Olga and Huitong 5 days a week in the babies room and Mele 5 days a week in the toddler room as lead educator.

Sadly, we have recently said goodbye to Holly who has worked tirelessly at Belford Oaks for the last 11 years. Holly has worked across most of the centre in many capacities ranging from room leader, second in charge, acting director and finally co-director. It is fair to say Holly has dedicated much of her time and effort (with many sleepless nights) to the role of co-director.

Belford Oaks will miss her very much and we wish her all the best in her future endeavours!

Kind Regards,

Suzie Crew

Supporting children and families through flu season

As we head into another flu season, we wanted to share a gentle reminder about the importance of the flu vaccine, especially for families with young children.

Many of you will remember that influenza hit our community hard in 2024. We had a number of staff, children and parents struck down by it, some even saying it was the sickest they've ever been. The flu can be serious, but getting vaccinated is a simple and effective way to protect your family from illness and complications. Plus, it's FREE for children under 5 years old.

To help reduce the risk of another tough flu season, we're encouraging all our staff to get their flu jab too, and we're investing in their health by covering the cost of their vaccination. A healthy team helps us provide the best care and continuity for your children.

Here's why the flu vaccine is worth prioritising this year:

1. **It protects children from severe illness** Young children are particularly vulnerable to the flu, which can sometimes lead to hospitalisation or complications like pneumonia. The vaccine significantly reduces this risk and helps keep kids healthy during peak flu season.



2. **It helps prevent the spread** Flu spreads quickly in group settings like early learning centres and schools. By vaccinating your child (and yourself), you're helping reduce the risk of spreading it to others, including older relatives or those with compromised immune systems.
3. **It boosts your family's immunity** When everyone in the household is vaccinated, it forms a protective shield around your family. That means fewer sick days, fewer disruptions, and more time doing the things you enjoy together.
4. **It reduces the risk of complications** Children with asthma, diabetes or other health conditions face a higher risk of serious flu-related complications. The flu vaccine adds an extra layer of protection for these children.
5. **It helps avoid missed childcare and work days** The flu can mean days or even weeks off for both children and adults. Vaccination helps minimise this disruption and keeps your family's routine on track.

The flu vaccine is safe, effective, free for under 5s, and easy to access. You can book an appointment through your GP or local pharmacy, or take advantage of Boroondara Council's immunisation clinic:

[Boroondara Immunisation Information](#)

For more information please visit: [Better Health Victoria – Flu Immunisation](#)

Thanks for helping us keep our community safe and well this flu season.

Important fee information for families:

We wish to remind all families that fees are payable **two weeks in advance** and must be kept up to date at all times. As outlined in our Parent Handbook, a child's place **cannot be maintained if fees are outstanding for more than one month.**

Unfortunately, we continue to experience a number of accounts falling into arrears. This places significant pressure on our centre's operations and impacts our ability to plan and deliver a high-quality program.

Therefore, we need to take a firmer approach in 2025. Families with fees in arrears will be contacted and required to make immediate arrangements to settle their accounts.

Management reserves the right to refuse care where fees remain unpaid.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in ensuring fees are paid on time.



Upcoming Events

April

- Friday 18th – Good Friday Public Holiday **CENTRE CLOSED**
 - Sunday 20th – Easter Sunday
- Monday 21st – Easter Monday Public Holiday **CENTRE CLSOED**
 - Tuesday 22nd – Earth Day
- Friday 25th - ANZAC Day Public Holiday **CENTRE CLOSED**
- **WEDNESDAY- 30TH- BOC COMMITTEE MEETING 7:30PM**

May

- Saturday 3rd - Belford Oaks Working Bee
 - Sunday 11th – Mothers day
- Monday 12th – Sunday 18th – National Road Safety Week
 - Friday 16th - Belford Oaks Trivia Night.
 - Monday 26th – National Day of Healing
 - Tuesday 27th Reconciliation week begins
- **WEDNESDAY- 28TH- BOC COMMITTEE MEETING 7:30PM**

June

- Tuesday 3rd – Reconciliation weeks ends.
- Monday 9th – Kings Birthday Public Holiday **CENTRE CLOSED**
 - Tuesday 20th – Matariki Day
- Sunday 29th - Belford Oaks Working Bee
- **WEDNESDAY- 25TH- BOC COMMITTEE MEETING 7:30PM**

July

- Sunday 7th – Sunday 14th NAIDOC week
 - Friday 19th – National Pyjama Day
 - Sunday 27th – National plant a tree day
- **WEDNESDAY 30th – BOC COMMITTEE MEETING, 7:30PM**



Individual updates

Babies room

We are delighted to welcome Olga & Huitong to our team! Olga & Huitong have begun forming warm and meaningful connections with the children, and we're thrilled to have her caring presence and gentle approach in the babies' room.

This year, we've also had the joy of welcoming several new children into our space. Watching them settle in, begin to build relationships with our educators, and develop a sense of belonging has been truly heartwarming. We take pride in fostering an environment where every child feels safe, valued, and supported.

Our Room Focus – Learning Through Relationships, Play & Discovery

This term, our program has been thoughtfully designed around the diverse developmental needs of the children in our room. As we have a growing number of both younger babies and pre-toddler-age children, our learning goals are intentionally tailored to support every child's unique journey.

For our younger children: Strengthening Identity and Belonging

Our main focus is nurturing a strong **sense of identity and belonging**, which lays the foundation for confident exploration and learning. We have been providing warm, responsive caregiving and engaging the children in developmentally appropriate experiences that support emotional security and sensory development. These include:

- **Sensory and messy play**, which fosters curiosity and builds neural pathways through hands-on exploration of textures, temperatures, and cause-and-effect.
- **Water play**, offering calming sensory input and opportunities for motor skill development and self-directed learning.
- **Schematic play**, such as transporting or enclosing objects, that supports early spatial understanding and cognitive processing.

Through consistent routines, gentle interactions, and trust-building experiences, the younger children are growing in confidence, expressing themselves more freely, and becoming active participants in their environment.

For our older children: Strengthening Social, Cognitive & Language Development

For children showing signs of more advanced development, we put more emphasis on extending their learning through experiences that support:

- **Social development**, by encouraging collaborative and peer-led play, such as group activities, turn-taking games, and role modelling for younger peers.



- **Cognitive development**, through puzzles, sandpit exploration, pretend play and structured play that challenges their problem-solving and reasoning abilities.
- **Language development**, through interactive story times, singing, and conversational exchanges that enhance vocabulary and comprehension.

Pretend play areas have also become a highlight in our room, allowing children to express ideas, take on different roles, and explore identity through imaginative scenarios. We are seeing beautiful moments of leadership, kindness, and connection as these children engage deeply with one another and take pride in helping new children feel included.

What's Been Happening in Our Room

Over the past few months, we've been delighted by the children's enthusiasm as they engage with everything on offer in our space:

- Art sessions have sparked creativity, with children experimenting with colours, textures, and materials. Their beautiful artwork now decorates our walls, adding warmth and a sense of ownership to the room.
- During Cultural Diversity Week, our Wednesday group explored Greek culture making koulourakia (Greek biscuits), while our Thursday group enjoyed dressing up in Asian cultural costumes. We also created a pretend Asian dining space for all children to explore and celebrate different traditions through role play.

Most of all, we've been touched by the gentle and heartwarming ways our older children have welcomed the younger ones—demonstrating empathy, sharing toys, and offering encouragement. Their example shows the true spirit of our learning community.

Thank you for your continued support and for sharing your beautiful children with us. We look forward to an exciting term ahead, filled with play, growth, and joyful memories.

Yugu, Olga, & Huitong



Toddler room

EXPLORING SCIENCE

From the last week of February to March and now April, we've seen a remarkable growth in our young learners' scientific curiosity and problem-solving skills. Together as a group, the children worked on a hands-on experiment, exploring the fascinating world of colour mixing. As they worked side-by-side, they learned to collaborate, share ideas, and observe the effects of mixing primary colours. The children eagerly experimented with various combinations, discussing their predictions and reactions as they saw the colours change before their eyes.

The group work laid the foundation for their independent exploration. Each child now has their own space at the table where they can continue their experiments and creative work. Whether mixing paints, exploring colour reactions, or experimenting with new materials, the children are empowered to investigate on their own. Through these individual activities, they've developed patience and persistence, learning how to approach tasks independently and take ownership of their learning process.

We've observed a lot of excitement around colour reactions and mixing, with children asking thoughtful questions like, "What happens when I mix blue and yellow?" or "Why does the colour change?" Their determination to discover answers reflects the Montessori philosophy, where curiosity and a hands-on approach to learning are encouraged. These small scientists are not only learning about colours but also about the process of inquiry and discovery. We're excited to continue supporting their journey of exploration, collaboration, and independent learning!

LEARNING ABOUT BUGS

The Bugs Exploration area has been an exciting and enriching experience for the children, providing them with hands-on opportunities to learn about the fascinating world of bugs. Educators have carefully set up an environment filled with a variety of bugs, offering the children a space to explore and observe at their own pace. This independent exploration allows them to develop a deeper understanding of the different types of bugs and their unique characteristics.

Throughout the process, educators play an essential role in guiding the children by helping them identify the names of the bugs and pointing out their distinct features. This support not only broadens their general knowledge about insects but also helps build their vocabulary, as they learn new words related to the bugs' appearance, behaviours, and habitats. By engaging with the bugs, children are also improving their cognitive skills as they sort, categorize, and compare the various insects and their features.



This project has proven to be a valuable learning experience, encouraging curiosity, critical thinking, and language development. The Bugs Exploration area continues to be a space where children are inspired to ask questions, make observations, and deepen their understanding of the natural world around them.

WELLNESS & WELLBEING

The toddlers have been thriving in a variety of engaging activities that contribute significantly to their overall wellness and wellbeing. Music and movement activities are particularly popular, allowing the children to express themselves freely and enjoy the sense of fun and freedom they bring. These activities not only improve their mood but also support their physical and emotional development.

Outdoor play is another favourite, with water play being a highlight for many of the toddlers. It's a wonderful way for them to explore, learn, and cool off while developing their motor skills and social interactions. Whether it's playing in the water or simply enjoying some quiet time reading books with friends and educators, the toddlers show great enthusiasm and curiosity in the outdoor environment.

Indoors, the toddlers enjoy the sensory experience of play dough, where they can create and imagine anything they like. This type of imaginative play encourages creativity and fine motor development, helping to expand their cognitive skills.

Overall, the toddlers' love for music, movement, outdoor play, and imaginative activities continues to contribute to their holistic development, making their days both enjoyable and educational.

Celebrating Toddler Milestones

We are glad to celebrate some wonderful milestones with our toddlers! This year, they've had the chance to apply icing on their cakes and blow out candles in front of their entire class, marking a special moment of joy and achievement. These small but meaningful experiences contribute to their sense of accomplishment and help build confidence. We look forward to many more milestones and joyful moments as the year progresses, with plenty of opportunities for growth, exploration, and celebration ahead!

Mele, Beth & Qin



Kinder room

Belonging & Identity

Throughout term 1, we welcomed the new 3-year-old kinders and their families into the Kinder room for 2025. During this transition, we ensured to have a strong connection and focus on supporting the children in their sense of belonging and identity within the room. One way for the children to share aspects of their identity with each other, was inviting the children to fill out an “All About Me” form at home with their families, which were shared during our group time lessons. Continuing from our focus on identity, we had discussions and explored our own physical features, and the similarities and differences throughout the room. To represent the individual children’s understanding on this, self-portraits were made using a variety of loose parts.

Cultural Diversity

Throughout the month of March, we focused strongly around celebrating and exploring different cultural throughout the room. This was reflected through the home corner dramatic play area, which contain different foods from around the world, through cooking experiences and through family engagement and visits.

Each week throughout March the children were invited to partake in different cooking experiences, reflecting on each educator’s cultural background. Kim took the children through an Italian cooking experience, making pizzas, Bulgarian cooking with Sebile and making cheese and vegemite scrolls with Kelsey to represent Australian culture.

Myra’s Mum, Nikita and Nani (Grandma) came in to teach the children all about Indian culture, through dance, costume, music and food.

Felix’s grandma came in and taught the children about Rwandan culture, through dance and traditional artefacts.

Excursion – Clean up Australia Day

We went on our first excursion of the year, celebrating Clean up Australia Day on the 3rd of March. We walked over to Victoria Park to allow the children the opportunity to help look after their community by safely picking up any rubbish we found along the way. Breaking up into 4 groups, each searched different areas, having discussions about the different types of rubbish we found, and which bins they belonged in.



Well-being Wednesday

During term 1, we have dedicated each Wednesday's group time session to focus on a different area on health and well-being. Introducing this into the weekly curriculum, helps to promote the children's social, physical and emotional well-being. This links directly with Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

We covered a range of topics including;

- Healthy eating
 - Sun safety
 - Body safety
- Teeth brushing and oral hygiene
 - Yoga
 - Meditation
 - Friendship
 - Affirmations

Sustainability

We have begun introducing the topic of sustainability into our group time session. Expanding the children's knowledge and understanding on sustainable practices, reflects the centre's philosophy and helps to promote the children's care for their environments and the world they live in. We have begun discussing the different bins and what sort of waste can and cannot be put into each of the bins.

Kelsey, Kim & Sebile



Kitchen

As we are well into the Autumn months now we will be moving to the Autumn/Winter Menu beginning Monday 7th incorporating more warm and wholesome meals into regular rotation. You will see meals such as casserole, pumpkin soup, chicken noodle soup making an appearance again. Of course fresh bread rolls will be served with all soups. With autumn comes some beautiful produce such as broccoli, beans, cucumber, snow peas, tomatoes and zucchini's just to name a few. Fresh produce paired with other nutrient dense food groups is a wonderful way to support the children's health and wellbeing.

Supporting the children's health as we move into the colder months. *Important nutrients to be consuming*

Protein

Helps to build immune system cells including antibodies

Animal-based: Lean meat, chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, milk

Plant-based: Beans, soy products, nuts and seeds

Vitamin A

Helps in immune system response regulation; keeps epithelial tissues and the respiratory system healthy

Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables: Carrots, squash, cantaloupe, pumpkin, papaya, sweet potatoes

Green leafy vegetables: spinach and broccoli

Vitamin C

Has antioxidant properties that protect cells from damage

Citrus fruits (oranges, tangerines, grapefruits) • Papaya • Capsicums • Brussels sprouts • Berries

Vitamin D

Regulates immune cell function

Fortified food items (milk, cereals) • Fatty fish (mackerel, salmon, tuna) • Sunshine

Vitamin E

Has antioxidant properties that protect cells from damage

Almonds, Peanuts, Sunflower seeds, Vegetable oil



Zinc

Helps to create new immune cells, and contributes to the body's ability to heal

Lean meat, Poultry, Milk, Whole grains and seeds

Recipe of the term. ANZAC Biscuits

Ingredients

- 2 cup plain flour
- 2 cup rolled oats
- 2 cup desiccated coconut
- 1 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp bio carb soda
- 4 tbs golden syrup
- 1 cup butter
- 2 tbs boiling water

Method

- Preheat fan-forced oven to 160°C. Lay baking paper over the biscuit trays ready to go.
- Sift the flour and combine with oats, coconut and brown sugar and stir well with a wooden spoon. getting rid of any lumps in the brown sugar.
- Warm the butter and golden syrup in the saucepan over low heat, stir regularly with a wooden spoon until melted through. Remove from heat.
- Mix the baking soda and water together and add to the butter mixture in the saucepan. It will bubble and froth. Quickly add the frothy mixture to the dry ingredients in the mixing bowl and mix everything together really well.
- Roll the mixture into balls about 2cm round. Place on the biscuit trays roughly 5cm apart. Wash and dry your hands and then flatten down the balls well.
 - Put into the oven for about 10 minutes. Remove and cool on wire racks.