



Belford Oaks Community Children's Centre

Newsletter

Term 2, 2025

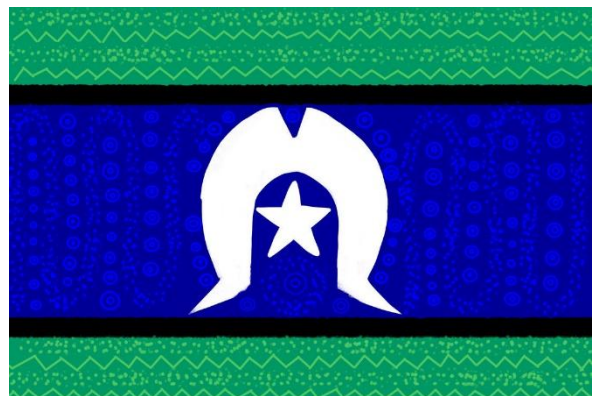
Acknowledgement to Country

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 bring another term to a close here at Belford Oaks, we're excited to reflect on the moments, big and small that have made this term so special for our young learners. From art projects to blossoming friendships and exciting discoveries, it has been wonderful to witness the children's growth and curiosity in action.

In this edition, you'll find highlights from the term, a look ahead at upcoming events and perhaps a sneak peak at what's to come in the rooms. We hope you enjoy celebrating your child's journey and the positive energy that defines our Belford Oaks community.

Thank you for your ongoing support—we're looking forward to another term full of learning, joy, and meaningful experiences!



A message from the director

Who can believe we are now heading into term 3. Term 2 was a very fun and eventful 11 weeks at Belford Oaks with so many wonderful learning opportunities for the children coupled with some fun for the parents and educators at the Annual Belford Oaks Trivia Night where we successfully raised over \$4,000 for the centre.

This term has seen many incursions, excursions and educational programs, scaffolding and strengthening our already rich and meaningful curriculum.

As I write this newsletter for the last time, I am saddened but also so very excited to be making the change back to what inspired my career from the very beginning, working with the children. Thank you for trusting me with Belford Oaks over the last 3 and a half years. I have learnt so very much across my time as co-director and director and have immensely valued every minute of it!

Kind regards,

Suzie

Belford Oaks' Commitment to Child Safety

At Belford Oaks Community Children's Centre, we are fully committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children. We aim to create an environment where children feel safe, happy, and supported.

We uphold and respect the rights of every child, and we extend that same respect and support to our staff and volunteers. We are dedicated to fostering a culture of child safety, participation, and empowerment.

We maintain a **zero-tolerance policy for child abuse**. All allegations and safety concerns are treated seriously and handled consistently with our comprehensive policies and procedures. We have both a legal and moral obligation to report any concerns regarding a child's safety, and we follow this responsibility with the utmost rigor.

Our centre is proactive in identifying and addressing potential risks of child abuse. We are committed to preventing harm through early intervention and by implementing effective risk-reduction strategies.

To support this commitment, Belford Oaks has robust recruitment and human resources practices in place. These are designed to minimise the risk of child abuse by new and existing educators, staff, and volunteers. Ongoing training and education are provided to ensure all personnel are well-informed about child safety and abuse prevention.



We are also deeply committed to:

- The cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- The cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Providing a safe, inclusive environment for children with disabilities

Child safety is a shared responsibility, and at Belford Oaks, it is at the heart of everything we do.

Important information for families:

RECRUITMENT FOR DIRECTOR POSITION As per email sent to families on Monday 7th July I (Suzie) am officially stepping down from the position of director at the beginning of September or earlier if applicable.

The Committee is already moving quickly to fill the vacant leadership positions:

- **Director** – Committee are working with our recruitment partner and also advertising publicly.
- **Assistant Director (2IC)** – Once a Director is appointed, committee will immediately commence recruitment for a 2IC to ensure strong, ongoing support.

Throughout this process committee are applying the same rigorous, Child Safe-aligned procedures that underpin Belford Oaks' Exceeding rating. Transparency, robust reference checks, and a commitment to cultural fit remain non-negotiable. We appreciate that two leadership departures within a few months may raise questions. Please be assured there is no underlying issue at Belford Oaks; my choice is purely personal, as evidenced by my decision to stay on at the Centre full-time as an educator. The staff and Committee remain united in our commitment to providing a stable, high-quality environment where every child, family, and staff member can thrive.

XPLOR & DEBIT SUCESS

With our go live date of Monday 14th July we have now made the change over to Xplor. This has replaced Qikkids for all intents and purposes. Please ensure you are signing in and out via the Xplor page in the safari browser or using the QR code which appears on the log in screen on the iPad. If you have not yet received your email to set up your Xplor account or you are having trouble please don't hesitate to reach out for support.

We're excited to share that our service has partnered with **Debit Success** to make fee payments easier and more convenient for families. With Debit Success, you can now set up **automatic direct debit payments**, giving you peace of mind that your fees are paid on time—without the hassle of manual transactions.



Setting up is quick and simple:

- Choose your preferred payment frequency (weekly, fortnightly, or monthly)
 - Select your bank account or credit/debit card
 - Enjoy secure, reliable, and flexible fee management

This system helps reduce administrative follow-ups and allows us to focus more on what matters most—your child's learning and development.

If you haven't already, and you would like to benefit from automated direct debit payments please log in to your Xplor Home app or via the Xplor Home Web Portal to set up your Debit Success account today.

Let's make fee management stress-free together!

Upcoming Events

July

- Friday 25th - National Pyjama Day, come dressed in your cosiest PJ's
- Tuesday 29th - Educator Professional Development Day - CENTRE CLOSED
 - Wednesday 30th - BOCCC Committee meeting 7:30pm

August

- Monday 4th - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.
- Tuesday 12th - Body Safety Superstars parent/carer workshop 6-8pm ONLINE
 - Saturday 30th - Working bee
 - Saturday 9th to Sunday 17th - National Science Week
 - Saturday 16th to Friday 23rd - Children's Book Week.
 - Wednesday 27th - BOCCC Committee Meeting 7:30pm



September

- Monday 1st to Sunday 7th - Child Protection Week
- Wednesday 3rd - Educators Professional Development Day CENTRE CLOSED
 - Wednesday 3rd - Early Childhood Educators Day
 - Sunday 7th - Father's Day
 - Monday 8th - International Literacy Day
 - Friday 12th - Belford Oaks Annual Art Show
 - Wednesday 24th - BOCCC committee meeting 7:30pm
- Thursday 25th - Footy Day, come dressed in your teams colours!
- Friday 26th - AFL Grand Final Public Holiday CENTRE CLOSED

October

- Saturday 4th to Friday 10th - World Space Week
 - Tuesday 21st - Diwali
- Wednesday 26th - BOCCC committee meeting 7:30pm



Individual updates

Babies room

We've had a busy and exciting few months in the Babies' Room at Belford Oaks! The children have been learning, playing, and exploring through a variety of fun activities that help them grow and develop in so many ways. One of the highlights was making our own pizzas. The children had lots of fun spreading sauce, choosing their toppings, and creating their own little meals. This activity helped build fine motor skills, encouraged independence, and gave us the chance to talk about healthy food choices. Because the children enjoyed it so much, we'll now be including cooking in our fortnightly program, on different days so everyone gets a turn.

The children also enjoyed painting beautiful butterflies after reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. The children learned about colour mixing and symmetry while expressing their creativity through art. Painting helps strengthen their hand coordination and gave them a chance to explore early maths and science ideas like balance and patterns. The story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* also led to fun learning about healthy eating.

The children loved using felt pictures to retell the story and name the different fruits and snacks. This helped build language and memory skills and also started great conversations about choosing healthy foods. Another favourite experience was our nature walk. We went outside to explore the natural world, looking at plants, bugs, and all the little things around us. This activity helped develop gross motor skills, built curiosity, and gave the children a calm and mindful way to connect with nature.

Looking ahead, we're excited to keep exploring the outdoors on our nature excursions and we'll continue to plan more each month, so every child gets a chance to join. We're also looking forward to more messy sensory play and fun music and movement sessions. Thank you so much for your continued support. It's such a joy to share these special moments with your children and to see them grow in confidence, creativity, and curiosity every day.

Olga. Huitong & Rabina



Toddler room

As Term 2 ends, we are sharing all the wonderful learning and development that has taken place with our Toddlers! This term has been full of exploration, discovery, and growth, with new experiences and activities that have fostered both individual and group learning. Let's take a look at what we've been up to:

Incursion Programs:

Butterflies Incursion

As part of our inquiry into the fascinating world of bugs, our toddlers engaged with a variety of learning materials including books, flashcards, and online research. Their curiosity was especially caught by the vibrant colours and delicate forms of butterflies. To deepen this interest, we introduced a special *Bug Incursion Program* where the children had the opportunity to observe and interact with real butterflies inside a specially designed tent. The hands-on experience allowed them to closely examine the butterflies' wings, colours, and movements, sparking wonder and enriching their understanding of these beautiful insects.

Sustainability and Planting

Our toddlers took their first steps toward becoming young eco-stewards through a Sustainability Program thoughtfully organised by the Kinder Teachers. During this engaging experience, they were introduced to the names and characteristics of various plants, such as lavender. Building on this learning, they each had the chance to plant their own seeds in small pots, fostering a personal connection with nature and responsibility for living things.

Fire Truck Centre Visit

With the exciting arrival of firefighters and their truck, the toddlers gathered around the bright red fire truck, their eyes wide with wonder as they examined some detail. Some pointed at the shiny hoses and dials, while others stretched out their hands to gently touch the wheels, handles, and other parts they could reach. The truck's towering size and gleaming surfaces seemed to mesmerize them.

Reconciliation Week

To mark Reconciliation Week, we welcomed a First Nation Person who guided the children through:

- Dreamtime storytelling using puppets such as Possums and Kangaroos
- Singing and rhythmic clapping to traditional songs, "Inaynay Capuana"



The incursion helped foster cultural competence, empathy, and respect, encouraging children to recognise and celebrate diversity. Through shared experiences, children developed a deeper appreciation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Tidalick the Frog

“Tidalick the Frog” was a delightful interactive storytelling incursion featuring:

- A puppet-led narrative about animals and habitats
- Music and movement sessions stimulating hopping, splashing, and exploring

The experience captured the children’s imagination and deepened their understanding of ecosystems, while also supporting language development and gross motor coordination. Our Children practiced active listening and sequencing.

Excursion Program – Discovering Our Local Environment

In addition to our incursion programs, the children took part in a local nature walk, where they explored the natural surroundings of our community. They:

- Collected leaves, bark, and flowers for sorting and classifying
- Observed transportations, birds, insects, and trees, sparking conversations about living and non-living things out there.
- Practiced road safety rules while crossing the road.

This real-world exploration supported children’s observation skills, sensory awareness, and sense of belonging.

Learning Highlights in the Room and Outdoor

Discovering Dinosaurs

As we have been reading books about dinosaurs, we also had to set up a table.

We included the name of each dinosaur and what type it was.

Our toddlers found it exciting to discover that some dinosaurs were as small as chickens, while others were as tall as buildings!

This topic allowed children to develop early science vocabulary, express ideas through dramatic play, and build narrative skills.



Role and Pretend Play

Pretend play remained a central part of our curriculum. Scenarios included:

- Doctors and patients using toy medical kits
- Shopkeepers and customers utilising the provided home corner resources.

These activities supported social competence, empathy, and problem-solving, while encouraging children to explore real-world roles.

Fine Motor Development

Even at a young age, developing fine motor skills is essential for building the foundation for writing, self-care, and other daily tasks. This term, the toddlers participated in activities such as drawing, tracing, and early mark-making. These experiences have helped strengthen their hand muscles, improve hand-eye coordination, and develop control and dexterity—skills they will continue to build upon as they grow.

Exploring Art and Creativity

Art has become a favourite way for the children to express themselves. Whether indoors or outdoors, they have experimented with a range of materials including textured papers, chinks, and natural items. Through these experiences, the children have explored colour, texture, and form while also expressing their thoughts and emotions. Art encourages creative thinking and helps build confidence and communication skills.

Cognitive Skills Through Puzzles

Puzzle play has been an engaging way to support cognitive development. Some of our toddlers have been solving puzzles both independently and in small groups, which encourages problem-solving, critical thinking, and perseverance.

Creative Play with Playdough

Playdough has provided endless opportunities for imaginative play and sensory exploration. As they roll, pinch, and shape the dough, they are developing fine motor control while expressing creativity. We've seen a variety of creations of animals, buildings, and imaginative shapes and all of which reflect the children's unique ideas and storytelling abilities.

Community and Responsibility – Caring for Barkley

As part of our focus on community and caring for others, these children have taken an active role in helping care for Barkley, our centre pet. Feeding him, maintaining his environment, and learning about his needs have helped the toddlers develop empathy, responsibility, and an understanding of how to care for living things.



Birthday Celebrations

We also celebrated some very special birthdays this term! Sophie, Hugo, Marlow, and Fletcher all turned three. These milestones were marked with joy and excitement, including songs, games, and shared celebrations. These moments help foster a sense of belonging and community, making each child feel valued and celebrated.

Looking Ahead.....

We have some exciting plans for next term! We will be continuing our hands-on learning approach with another excursion and incursion. These experiences will further enrich the children's understanding of the world, help them build new skills, and provide opportunities for meaningful exploration.

We will also continue to focus on enhancing creativity, cognitive development, and fine motor skills through new activities, resources, and play opportunities. Our goal is to create an engaging environment that encourages curiosity, collaboration, and a love for learning.

Mele, Beth & Qin



Kinder room

The Resilience Project/ Thoughtful Thursday

This term we introduced The Resilience Project Early Years Wellbeing Program. This program uses engaging, practical and evidence-based strategies to build the foundation of positive mental health for young children. The children have enjoyed engaging in a wide range of activities, particularly focussing on emotions and feelings this term. They have also enjoyed completing weekly activities in their own workbooks.

Further, each term we choose a different day of the week to focus on Outcome 3 of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, "Children have a strong sense of wellbeing". This term was "Thoughtful Thursday". The children engaged in activities and experiences that focussed on developing their social and emotional wellbeing, as well as physical and mental wellbeing.

Numeracy and Literacy

The children have continued building on their literacy and numeracy skills through a variety of activities such as Number Bingo, Alphabet Soup, Alphabet Bingo, and counting games/puzzles. We also introduced Jolly Phonics this term to support the children's literacy learning. Jolly Phonics is a comprehensive program, based on the proven, fun, and multi-sensory synthetic phonics method that gets children reading and writing from an early age. This means that we teach letter sounds as opposed to the alphabet. Each sound is introduced through a story, an action and then a song.

Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth. During this week the children explored and learnt more about Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander culture.

They discovered why it's important to acknowledge the land and country we are on, and they also learnt more about Bush Tucker. The children also engaged in a cooking experience, and used native ingredients from our Bush Tucker Garden, such as native basil, oregano, and thyme to make damper.

Community Helpers

In May, the kinder children learnt all about civic participation and the roles people play within our community. The children learnt about a wide range of community helpers and the important jobs they do to keep our neighbourhood safe, healthy, clean, and to also help us learn. The children engaged in a variety of hands-on experiences such as sorting and matching games during group time, where they learnt about a range of community helpers' uniforms, vehicles, workplaces, and tools/equipment. We also set up a Police Station dramatic play space in the cubby house and a Doctor's Office inside the kinder room to support their learning



Road Safety Week

At Belford Oaks, we place great importance on road safety education and educating the children about how to be responsible pedestrians, cyclists, and passengers in vehicles. This term we taught the children about road signs and road rules and the importance of obeying them.

Dinosaurs

Some of the children have a huge interest in dinosaurs. Therefore, we planned a dinosaur exploration topic and used a variety of books, games, posters, and dinosaur toys to explore and educate the children about a range of dinosaurs including, a

T-Rex, Triceratops, Brachiosaurus, Spinosaurus, Stegosaurus, and more! The children further learnt more about dinosaur habitats, diets, and fossils!

Celebrations

Mother's Day

This year for Mother's Day the children baked yummy shortbread biscuits for their mums. They loved making the cookie mixture and decorating the top with fondant icing, edible gold sparkles and a Happy Mother's Day stamp. The children also created a special 'All About My Mum' card, and they painted a single rose for their mums as well.

Excursions and Incursions

Nature Play/Glass Creek Wetlands

This term we introduced our Nature Play excursions. We will be visiting Glass Creek Wetlands in East Kew every month where the children will use their senses to explore their natural environment and investigate in a more open-ended outdoor environment. So far, the children have loved climbing over rocks, walking through "the forest", crossing the riverbank, and creating forts using sticks. They have also observed local flora and fauna.

Kew Traffic School On May 15th, we visited Kew Traffic School, and the children engaged in the Road Safety Education Program. The children learnt road safety in a broad range of everyday scenarios by engaging in imaginative play. The children loved riding the bikes and scooters around Kew Traffic School, and they enjoyed obeying all the different road signs and traffic lights.

Reconciliation Week Incursion

To celebrate National Reconciliation Week, the whole centre engaged in an Aboriginal Storytelling and Artefacts program. This educational session combined storytelling, artefacts, and interactive activities, creating an engaging session for the children. During the session, children learnt about different aspects of Aboriginal culture through storytelling, as well as an introduction to the history of



Aboriginal tools and artefacts. Further activities such as acting out stories and engaging with cultural artefacts gave the children the opportunity to further immerse themselves in Aboriginal culture. The Indigenous man facilitating the program played the didgeridoo and clapsticks. He made different animal sounds (kangaroo, emu, kookaburra, dingo) with the didgeridoo and the children had to guess what animal it was.

The children were also shown Indigenous artefacts such as a boomerang, possum skin and kangaroo skin, which the children were able to feel. It was very soft. They also engaged in song and dance. Everyone really enjoyed this cultural experience.

Community Connections Excursions

To further support the children's community connections, we planned a variety of excursions/incursions within our local neighbourhood. We visited Kew Library, Adeney Café, Kew East Primary School, and the children posted letters in the post-box on High St. We were also very lucky to have the local Fire Department visit.

'Tiddalick the Frog' Drama Toolbox Incursion

To celebrate NAIDOC WEEK, the children engaged in a Drama Toolbox Incursion. This incursion brings to life the Dreamtime story of Tiddalick the Frog. During this unique incursion, the children became aware of native wildlife such as Emus, Frill Necked Lizards, Wombats, Koalas, Kangaroos, Cockatoos and Kookaburras.

Using performance, music and storytelling techniques the children became part of the story and explored the importance of sharing water and resources.

Hey Dee Ho and Kelly Sports

This term Hey Dee Ho was held on a Wednesday. This music program is an educational music experience where children learn the concepts of beat, rhythm, tempo, pitch, and dynamics in a play-based environment. Different educational themes are presented each week using props, puppets, costumes, and percussion instruments to deliver a multi-sensory experience.

Kelly Sports was held on a Friday this term. The children further developed their gross motor skills, team building skills and hand- eye coordination through playing games and sports such as soccer, rugby, basketball, and football.

. Kim.. Kelsey & Sebile



Kitchen

Hello from the kitchen

It's been a busy couple of weeks in the kitchen getting ready for the annual kitchen audit. This involves an independent body coming into the centre and looking over the Food Safety Plan for the kitchen, making sure everything is in order and in line with regulations. I am proud to say we have achieved a good result for another year!

In the last couple of months, the centre has seen a definite uptake in cooking experiences within the rooms. These learning experiences have so many wonderful benefits for the children.

1. Builds Fine Motor Skills

Stirring, pouring, whisking, squeezing, kneading, and picking up ingredients help children strengthen the small muscles in their hands and fingers—important for writing and self-care tasks.

2. Encourages Language Development

Talking through recipes, naming ingredients, and discussing steps helps children build vocabulary, learn sequencing words (first, next, last), and follow directions.

3. Introduces Basic Math Concepts

Cooking naturally includes counting (e.g., "2 eggs"), measuring (cups, spoons), sorting, and patterns—early numeracy in action!

4. Boosts Early Science Understanding

Children observe real-life science—how heat changes ingredients, what happens when things mix, or how dough rises. It builds curiosity and problem-solving skills.

5. Promotes Healthy Eating Habits

Kids are more likely to try new foods when they help prepare them. It encourages positive attitudes toward fruits, vegetables, and healthy choices.

6. Fosters Social-Emotional Growth

Cooking encourages turn-taking, patience, and teamwork. It's also a great opportunity for bonding, celebrating achievements, and building confidence.

7. Supports Cultural Awareness

Cooking different dishes from around the world helps children learn about other cultures, fostering respect, inclusion, and diversity from a young age.

8. Enhances Focus and Attention

Following a recipe or cooking activity helps children learn to listen, stay on task, and finish an activity from start to end—great preparation for school readiness



A recipe for you.....

As you may have noticed the winter menu incorporates many more hearty dishes such as casserole, pumpkin soup, chicken risotto and apricot chicken to keep the children nourished and warm throughout the cooler months. I thought I would share a warm and hearty soup recipe in light of this.

Potato, leek, bacon & bean soup

Preparation: 25 minutes | **Cooking:** 45 minutes | **Serves:** 4 –6

Ingredients:

- 2 tbs olive oil
- 2 medium leeks, trimmed, halved lengthways and thinly sliced
 - 175g rindless shortcut bacon, roughly chopped
 - 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 - 600g Desiree potatoes, peeled and diced
 - 400g can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
 - 4 cups chicken stock {Salt Reduced}
 - ½ cup reduced fat cream
 - Toasted wholegrain bread, to serve

Method

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks, bacon and garlic and cook, stirring often, for 5 minutes until leeks are tender. Add potatoes and cook, stirring often, for 5 minutes.
2. Stir in cannellini beans and stock. Cover and bring to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer, partially covered and stirring occasionally, for 20-25 minutes until potatoes are tender.
3. Using a hand blender, blend soup until smooth. Stir in cream. Heat soup over low heat until hot.
4. Spoon into serving cups or bowls and serve with toasted wholegrain bread.

Monique