



riddells creek primary school

step up and step out for success

Prep Information



For all our school happenings follow us on Instagram;

School @riddellscreekp

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden @riddellscreekp

Riddells Creek Primary School

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Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Starting school is an exciting milestone in your child's life - and your own!

At Riddells Creek Primary School we look forward to working with you and your child to make this important stage rewarding and positive.

Our vision is that our students will be active participants in a community of learners, inspired to become valued, informed, tolerant citizens and enthusiastic learners for life. We believe that every child has the fundamental right to learn to read, write and develop numeracy skills, and this is reflected in the evidence-based prep programmes we offer. We ensure all areas of the curriculum are integrated seamlessly and developed authentically in our learning programmes.

Our staff are committed to meeting the learning needs of all children, where their special attributes and talents are valued and nurtured. We have an open door policy and are committed to honest communication between home and school. This is an integral part of your child's learning and we value this strong partnership.

Once again , welcome to our school. We look forward to working with you and your child.

Many parents have asked how they can best prepare their child for starting school. We hope you find these ideas helpful.

Children are natural learners. Learning is what they do best! The types of learning that comes naturally to children is the sort that requires them to be active, curious, probing, problem-solving children who want to know why and how things happen. They also want to be able to do things for themselves. This learning provides them with important skills for dealing with the world around them long before they come to school. By age 5 or 6 they have a good foundation in English oral language (no small feat!), along with a host of physical and social skills.

Play is vital as it is a child's natural way of learning about the world and their place in it. It gives children the opportunity to experiment with ideas, practice different skills, problem solve creatively and develop concentration. Through play, children learn to co-operate, develop gross and fine motor skills, share, and get along with others.

Children who come from homes that are rich in language, where family members enjoy speaking and listening to each other, where stories are read, and oral language is valued, have been wonderfully prepared for school. Children who have been exposed to rich vocabulary and discussion about the many areas of general knowledge do far better when learning to read and comprehend what they are reading.

Children who have been encouraged to ask questions, to play imaginatively, share and compromise with others and to express themselves creatively, tend to transition naturally, and with confidence, into school life.

Enclosed in this welcome pack are some ideas and activities you can enjoy with your child. These are suggestions only. We *do not* expect that every child will acquire this knowledge prior to starting school as children develop and learn at different rates.

This is a very special time in the life of a child so enjoy your children. Talk to them, read to them, and most of all, have fun with them.



DAILY ORGANISATION

It is important to arrive at school early enough to ensure your child is settled into the class before the bell rings at 9.00am. A good time is 8.45am. Our classrooms are open for you and your child from 8.45am. We request that you try not chat to the classroom teacher at length before school, as there are often meetings to attend and preparations to make for the day ahead.

On the first day place your child's items/bag together in their locker and come into the classroom to meet the classroom teacher. On subsequent days, encourage your child to be responsible for their own belongings and preparing for the day. Once the morning session has started, please use the teacher's guidance as to the best time to leave. We encourage parents to get to know each other, however please do not continue conversations in the classrooms.

All children will finish school at 3.30pm. Prep teachers will usually set up a designated area for pick up, however if you prefer your child to come to you or leave with a sibling, discuss with your child where to meet, and who will be meeting him or her at the end of the day. Please let the teacher know if arrangements change. We will advise parents where to collect their child at the end of the day.

Could you please ensure your child has the following items ready for the first day:

Personal articles/clothing clearly named, school bag, lunchbox, drink bottle and their art smock.

Reader bags and hats are provided by the school.



ORAL LANGUAGE

The oral language programme comprises of listening and speaking. The most important skill children will need in facing the future is to be competent communicators.

Our aim is to provide a programme that encourages all children to participate in listening activities, and to be active listeners. They are given opportunities to become confident speakers, to enrich and extend their vocabulary, and to adapt their speaking to different audiences by telling stories, reciting and reading aloud.

To support our work at school please:

- Make time to talk to your child. Time spent speaking and listening to what they have to say will help build their confidence in expressing their ideas while building rich vocabulary
- Encourage your child's natural curiosity by modelling an interest in the world around you
- Enjoy stories and rhymes together. Reading to your child is critical to vocabulary development and listening comprehension
- Help your child to listen and speak as part of a group with family and friends
- Develop social courtesies, this is an important skill!
- Encourage correct use of speech. If you have concerns about your child's speech, speak to their teacher



LETTER & SOUND KNOWLEDGE

Recognition of our English language letters and sounds is emphasised in the initial stages of schooling and it is beneficial if the child does have a background of the basic alphabetic 'code' including recognising basic letter sounds, letter names and being able to match letters to sounds. Your child will be assessed on their knowledge and activities may be sent home based to support your child's learning, usually an alphabet sheet to assist your child in mastering the basic alphabet 'code'. Your child may bring home high frequency words to practice, which are in line with our synthetic phonics programme.

Some ideas for helping your child learn the alphabet code include:

- Flash cards with letters and picture clues. We recommend: <https://heggerty.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Heggerty-ABC-Chart-Download-1.pdf>
- Write letters on cards e.g. Find the letter which matches the sounds 'Ss'. Start off slowly, 4-5 letters a week.
- Use the alphabet cards to play snap, fish etc this can be done for either letter names or sounds.
- Play "Odd One Out". Say 3 words e.g. bear, bubble, tiger. Which is the odd one out that starts a different way?
- Sound out words and ask your child to say the word, eg., s-u-n, your child says 'sun'
- Rhyming words. Can you think of a word that rhymes with pen?
- Draw letters outside with chalk or water and a paintbrush.



READING



In term 1, the books being sent home are lovely books that expose your child to a wide variety of topics and text types (fiction and non-fiction). They provide beautiful, enriched reading experiences that promote a love of reading. The majority of these books contain complicated alphabet code knowledge: much of which has not yet been explicitly taught to your child. We encourage you to read these books to your child for enjoyment.

When you do this, you will:

- Model what fluent reading 'sounds' like
- Model appropriate expression and phrasing (e.g. slight pauses at commas and full pauses at full stops)

When you read to your child, we also suggest that you:

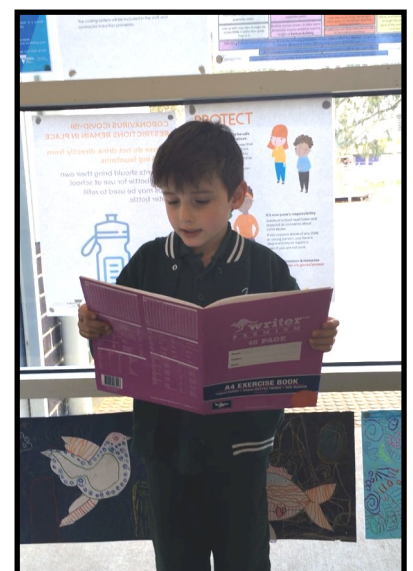
- Talk about the book and encourage your child to retell the main parts of the story to you
- Talk about the characters, plots and settings of stories and link these to the illustrations provided
- Discuss learning from informational texts
- Compare the people and events in texts with those in your own lives
- Select several words from the text (words that your child knows) and ask them to put the word in a sentence
- Explain any words that your child might not understand

Soon, with the help of their teacher, your child will learn how to read words accurately themselves. This can be quite a tricky process for children when they first come to school. Some children come to school already being able to read while others have little knowledge of how to do so. Your child will receive special books called decodable readers that match the letters taught at school. They will be able to read them without having to guess. Although decodables offer simple story lines, they really build a strong 'word attack' template that supports all learners to success with reading.

While we base our early reading program on decodables, we commit to shared books on a daily basis, and deliberately choose high quality, natural text. High quality literature (picture books, class novels, Dreamtime stories, non-fiction texts) are used for comprehension based activities, vocab development, oral language skills, grammar knowledge, and sense of story. We are vigilant and deliberate in exposing all our students to great texts. We scaffold and model thinking and questioning skills so that they improve their comprehension and general knowledge

Supporting your child at home:

- Allow plenty of time for your child to have a go at working out words (about 5-10 seconds- yep, that's a long time!) before you help. Avoid saying to 'look at the pictures', words *must* be decoded
- If they get stuck, you can help by prompting with 'say the sounds' (pointing to each sound) and 'blend them' together (sliding your finger under the word from left to right)
- Keep reading to your child. This will give them the chance to hear lots of words and learn lots of stories, facts and new information
- If prompting doesn't work, model saying each sound, pointing to each letter, then say the word



WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Development in learning to read goes hand in hand with learning to write. That said, writing is the most complicated language skill to master. It also takes the longest to master!

Encourage your child to be interested in writing, maybe helping you write a letter or write a shopping list. If your child has mastered some letters and sounds, you might like to have them write simple words, like *sat, pin, pat, map, tap*. When your child is wanting to write at home please encourage him/her to 'have a go'. We want children to be independent writers.

At school we encourage the children to learn through making attempts, even if some are not completely successful. Through targeted, sequenced learning, students increase their writing skills and see themselves as writers.

Students enter school at different stages in the writing process.

- Some children entering school do not have any letter knowledge and their first attempt at writing may be what you would see as squiggles or spider writing.
- If a child has some letters knowledge he/she may show that letters are important in writing, but is not relating letters to sounds yet. However, the writer is writing on his/her own, with ownership of the ideas. Pictures can be used as a plan for the writing.
- Preps will begin with a strong focus on letter shapes and will spend some time mastering correct letter formation. Poor formation is very difficult to correct once it is automatic
- Preps students will have daily opportunity to record the letters that match sounds, some whole words and attempt letters in unknown words. Your child's teacher will model writing daily, and provide worked examples to support learning the many elements of writing.
- Writing must have purpose, therefore writing is strongly linked to inquiry themes
- Your child's teacher will explicitly teach how to write quality sentences using student ideas and knowledge
- As children grow in confidence they begin to expand their ideas, include interesting vocabulary and take on feedback to improve their writing.

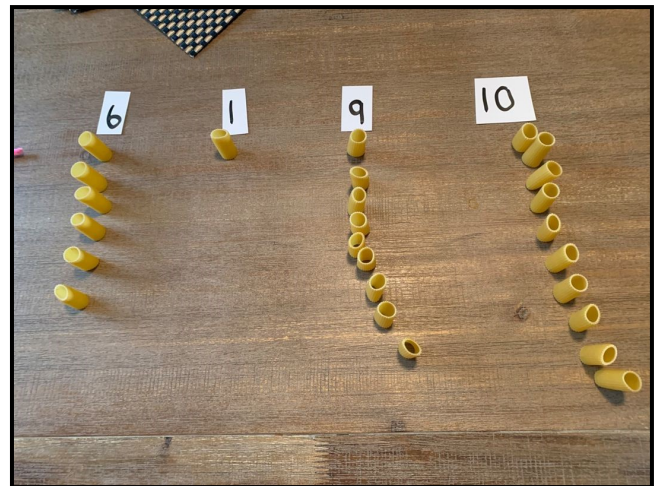


NUMERACY

In the first years at school your child will focus on becoming numerate, that is confident with numbers from 0-20. This includes counting forwards and backwards, reading and writing numbers, manipulating collections and simple addition and subtraction.

Ideas for helping your child develop numeracy skills include:

- Provide opportunities for your child to practice counting as they help you with simple chores e.g. setting the table - "Can you get 4 forks and 3 spoons to lay the table for tea?". At the Supermarket - "Put 8 oranges in the bag for me please"
- Talk about simple maths problems with your child e.g. "I need to make 2 sandwiches for you and 2 for your brother. How many will that be altogether?"
- Let your child help with baking. This activity involves lots of maths concepts
- Use maths language with your child e.g. tallest, heaviest, long, short, before, after, between, middle, first, more than, less than....
- Play dice and card games
- Making and pointing out patterns
- Ordering numbers from smallest to largest



WHAT IS INQUIRY?

The act of inquiry is critical to our learning and growth. We make sense of our world through exploring, testing and evaluating. We learn through experience and our desire to make meaning from that experience. We question others and we question ourselves.

Inquiry allows for a wide range of activities from the arts to the sciences, literacy and numeracy, integrating Aboriginal Australian study and following students' ideas, interest and passions.

WELLBEING

Our social and emotional learning takes place in all classrooms with the Kimochi program. This program facilitates learning the skills of recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, learn tolerance and respect for all persons and make ethical and safe choices. In the junior grades we further build these skills and resilience by engaging in play based learning which simulate classroom and yard situations. You can find out more about the Kimochi program here <https://www.kimochis.com/>



REPORTING TO PARENTS

When your child begins school they will participate in a range of assessments with their classroom teacher. These assessments include:

- Oral language
- English
- Maths
- Auditory processing

This will give a clear picture of the knowledge and experience your child brings with them. It will allow for targeted and individualized planning and learning.

You know your child best. If you have any particular concerns about your child's academic or social and emotional learning at any stage of their schooling our process is as follows:

1. Make an appointment to discuss your concerns with your child's teacher
2. If required, develop a plan with the teacher which may include a pediatrician appointment, assessments with a DET speech therapist or specialist appointments
3. Follow up with our Wellbeing Coordinator
4. If required, an individual learning plan with strategies recommended by school, home and any professionals involved with your child will be established
5. Regular (term or semester) meetings with the wellbeing coordinator and your child's teacher
6. If required, a meeting with the principal to outline your ongoing concerns

At the end of each semester an electronic report will be provided. There will be conferences in the middle of the year for parents/carers, students and the teacher. All teachers welcome informal discussions and additional meetings may be scheduled with your teacher in order to strengthen the home school partnership.

Once again welcome to our school.

We look forward to working with you and your child.



*Riddells Creek PS acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land.
We pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging of the Kulin Nation.*



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