The word ‘Kindergarten’ translates to ‘child’s garden’; MECS Kindergarten is named deliberately because we aim to be a place where children (and families) can delight in God’s presence, play in His wonder- and awe-filled world, and grow and learn in a secure and loving environment.

**Orientation**
The year has started extremely well, with the children settling into their groups with happy, enthusiastic and smiling faces! We are delighted to see the children walking so confidently into Kindergarten. Orientation day was a great success and also acted as a transition for children who had been coming to K3 or Busy Bees last year. Thanks to Sarah, Lee and Lynda who stepped in to make the days run smoothly.

While the beginning of the year may seem to start slowly, the orientation weeks allow staff to quickly get to know each child, be available to meet children’s needs and help develop ideas in play, as well as allowing the children to get to know other children in their group. We spend time during these early weeks introducing our class guidelines and how to be safe and caring at Kinder. These guidelines are based on the ‘We choose virtues’ program which focuses on 12 virtues that come under 3 headings: ‘We Obey; We are Kind; We are Helpers’.

**Community Noticeboard and Parent Library**
We have a common space for notices and information in the centre of the Piazza on the storeroom cupboard doors. Pamphlets and notices are available for you to help yourself. Remember, if you are borrowing from the Parent library, enter your book and date when you take and return a book.

**Child Safety**
Have you seen the posters in the Piazza about not leaving children in cars? This is a timely reminder from the government and as a policy of MECS that no child is to be left in a car under any circumstances. Also, we have been talking with the children about holding your hand as they walk to the car. MECS Kinder pathway leads straight out into the traffic in the carpark, so it is imperative that children are holding your hand as they leave the Kindergarten.

### Important dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teddy Bear Picnic</td>
<td>Friday 12th Feb</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect Morning Tea Possum</td>
<td>Friday 4th March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect Morning Tea Bluebird</td>
<td>Tuesday 22nd March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect Morning Tea Rosella</td>
<td>Thursday 17th March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour Day Holiday All</td>
<td>Monday 14th March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinder Jumper Orders Due</td>
<td>Date To Be Confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muddlarks Wet Weather Clothing</td>
<td>Date To Be Confirmed</td>
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Kinder Staff Updating their First Aid
On Tuesday night, the Kinder staff met together to update their First Aid certificates, which covers CPR, Asthma, Anaphylaxis plus many scenarios to ensure we are all as prepared as we can be in the event of the need for First Aid. It was terrific to talk together about Kinder-specific situations (as well as wider school issues) and procedures as we must comply with the National Regulations for Education and Care (Early Childhood). Thanks to Pete Beams, MECS Property Manager who is qualified to train in this area; we all had a lot of fun. We will be completing the course next Tuesday.

Kinder Jumpers and Muddlarks Wet Weather Clothing Orders
We are making available the opportunity for you to purchase a Kinder Jumper (Sloppy Joe) with our printed logo. There are a selection of colours and sizes. You can view them online at http://www.ramo.com.au/category/hoodies/sloppy-joe. An order form will soon be available. More information to follow regarding due dates for ordering.

Research has shown that outdoor play is vital in early-childhood. Consequently at MECS Kindergarten we like to use the phrase “there is no such thing as bad weather, just poor choices for clothing”.

Orders and payment for good quality wet weather gear can be made online at http://www.muddlarks.com.au

You can receive a 20% discount by entering the code MECS when ordering. More information to follow regarding due dates for ordering.

Piazza
Please remember to supervise your children in the Piazza area. The time waiting for your session to start should be calm and engaging for the children, so that when they enter Kindergarten they are ready for learning. Children should not be jumping or climbing on furniture or under tables, but waiting quietly with you or talking with a group of friends. We have one cupboard with some picture story books and toys that you can access, however please make sure you and your child puts them away once they have finished with them.

Arrival and Departures
Please remember that the Kindergarten staff are very busy at the beginning of each session and their first priority is the needs of the children arriving. Speaking with the staff after a session is best, or please arrange a time with us. This way we have the least amount of disruptions at the beginning of a session.

The children will be packing their own bag at the end of each session. We would appreciate you coming to the door one at a time, and we will send your child to the door to meet you when we see you. We have asked the children to wait with us until we say their name. This ensures your child is handed over to you safely. Please let your child’s teacher know if one of your authorised nominees is going to pick up your child, via a short message in the attendance book.

By having parents wait in the Piazza, we avoid congestion in the playroom and are promoting independence and self-help skills in the children – they are already showing us how capable they are! Once all of the children have been dismissed, the staff are then available to chat with you. Thank you for your cooperation with this process.
**Seesaw: The Learning Journal**

We hope you have had a chance to download the Seesaw App and have a look at your child’s first week at Kinder. Follow the instructions on your handout and hover over the QR code to go to your child’s learning journal.

**Kinder Connect Morning Tea**

Our wonderful community development officers organise for you a morning tea for the parents in your group where you can relax, have a cuppa and connect with each other. The dates for this term are displayed at the top of this newsletter. We hope you can come!

**A Note from Reuben**

Hi! My name is Reuben Holmes and I have Downs Syndrome. This year I am a member of the Possum 4 year old group. I have 5 brothers and sisters! I love Toy Story, using an iPad, music and guitars. Sometimes I have difficulty communicating my needs. I use sign language and pictures. I am learning to work socially with my peers and appreciate patience. I am more alike my friends than not!

**Helping at Kindergarten**

Thank you all for placing your name on the roster to come and help us. The ‘Helping at Kindergarten’ list is displayed in the kindergarten playrooms, which outlines some duties in which you could be involved.

The following pages will give you a brief update on what’s happening in each section of the Kindergarten.

Blessings,

**Wendy Mason – Early Years Coordinator**

**Possum and Koala News**

The 4 year old children have been exploring their sense of belonging at Kindergarten as they get to know their educators, space and playmates. This year we welcome Carolyn Morden, who is employed through Connections to work as an additional assistant in the Possum room.

God made people special - we are the crowning glory of creation, and we are designed to work in community with each other. During Term 1, we want to continue to build a sense of belonging, a place where children feel happy and safe, where learning together is fostered. As the children become familiar with their new routine, classroom, teachers and classmates, we work towards a classroom community where each child is known, respected and valued. Group rules are established together, giving children ownership over their own behaviour at Kindergarten.

**Social Skills Program**

Good social skills are essential to how well a child adapts to Kinder, and further down the track, school. Throughout this term, we will be systematically teaching fundamental skills such as looking at people when talking to them, listening and not interrupting, following class rules, sharing and taking turns. Complex skills can then follow such as identifying emotions in themselves and in others and responding appropriately, managing conflict without aggression and asserting their own needs appropriately. With these skills, children are able to develop positive relationships with other children and adults, and learn how to express their feelings safely. As a result children develop a strong sense of self-esteem and self-confidence.
Topics covered this term will be:

1. Greeting others
2. Taking turns: talking and listening
3. Taking turns at play
4. Sharing
5. Asking for help
6. Identifying feelings
7. Empathy

We have looked at the BIG book, the Bible, where we find God’s story. Because God created us He knows us - our lives have meaning because we are known by God. We are all made uniquely in the image of God, with different gifts and talents. God’s intimate knowledge of us is beautifully described in Psalm 139. It is important that little children begin to explore who they are, what they like and dislike, and work towards an understanding that we are all made by God. We want children to realize the wonder of their own creation by God, and their importance to God.

During these orientation weeks, we have explored the idea of holidaying with our family, and heard from each other about the types of things they did over the summer. From these discussions we have moved from familiar, family discussions to areas of interest, such as sea creatures.

On Friday 12 February, both K4 groups will attend together for the first time. We want to celebrate the day with a Teddy Bears Picnic, as we meet new friends and begin to build our classroom culture. Please send along 1 Teddy on Friday.

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at our family as a Community, where God has given parents the special job of caring for their children as they grow. We will also look at ourselves, our emotions and how we affect others around us.

We are looking forward to a wonderful term.

Wendy, Karen, Cherie and Andrea - 4 Year Old Program Educators

BLUEBIRDS AND ROSELLAS NEWS

The 3 year olds and Mrs Eastham have started the year fabulously!

Orientation days went really well and the children have settled right in and have already begun to learn about the culture of our Kindergarten, including the routine for washing hands before eating their snack, wearing their hats outside and sitting together on the mat.

The K3’s have also learnt each other’s names in their small groups. They have met their special Kinder pet friend (Bluebird/Rosella) that they will have an opportunity to take home throughout the year for a week. They have learnt their special Kinder pet theme song that I am sure you will hear quite often throughout the year.

“I’m a little Rosella/Bluebird
So are you,
We love Jesus
And He loves us too
When we get together
Then we sing
Thank you Lord for everything!”
This term we will be learning how our awesome God created Colour and Beauty and in His Image we are also creative beings. So, to start with learning about colours, from 16th February the children will have an opportunity to wear a primary colour of the day. They don’t have to be fully dressed in one full colour (as Mrs Koole is prone to do) but they can just wear a T-shirt or socks of that particular colour.

**Colour dates to remember:**
- Thurs 18 February: Blue
- Tues 23 February: Red
- Thurs 25 February: Yellow
- March 1 – 3: Any colour or rainbow

Well done K3’s, we are going to have a wonderful year with lots of fun, games, songs and creating memorable moments, learning about our Lord and Saviour.

*Lee and Sarah - 3 Year Old Program Educators*

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**Busy Bees News**

Welcome to 2016. I hope you all had a wonderful and relaxing break.

It was lovely seeing you all again with your beautiful children. We welcome four new families starting in each group, so lots of new friendships to be made.

Please remember to apply sunscreen on your child before coming to Busy Bees and it would be great to encourage your child(ren) to wear a hat while playing outside. Also this year I would like to introduce 'nude food' for our morning tea or lunch. This means bringing food without plastic wrapping and remember the Kinder has a no nut policy so please no peanut butter, nutella or muesli bars with nuts. Also if your child has any food allergies, please let me know.

*Lynda – Playgroup Leader*

Blessings from all of the Kindergarten Staff,

*Karen, Cherie, Andrea, Lee, Sarah, Susan, Lynda & Wendy*