As we began the year, I was reminded of a passage from Isaiah, which refers to ‘God’s Garden of delight.’

“The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up age-old foundations; you will be called the repairer of broken walls, restorer of streets with dwellings.” Isaiah 58:11

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.

The year has stared extremely well, with the children settling into their groups with happy, enthusiastic, smiling faces! It is lovely to now have full groups attending and we are delighted to see the children walking so confidently into kindergarten.

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’.

Some housekeeping
Thank you to the families who have already donated a box of tissues. This helps us to build our supply for the year. We also appreciate any junk materials such as boxes, washed yoghurt cups, corks, wool, plumbers’ piping (pvc) in short lengths (great in the sandpit!), and appropriate magazines (home based type mags that show home living spaces, people, families, etc) that we can use for cutting pictures.

Please continue to check your pigeonhole for information. Kinder children will get a weekly school newsletter only if they do not have an older sibling attending the school.

Please remember also to be diligent in checking your child’s number in the attendance book and signing in, in the appropriate place.

We ask that you be patient with us in regard to car parking. A sign for Prep and Kinder parents only is currently underway. While it may seem inconvenient, please remember that other children must never be left in the car while you come in to pick up your child.

Piazza
Please remember to supervise you 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.

**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.

**Grandparents and Special Friends’ Day**
Grandparents and Special Friends’ day is an annual event for the MECS Primary School. This year it falls on Thursday March 6. As it will not coincide with our 4 year old groups, and it is still early days for the 3 year olds, we will wait until later in the year to host a Grandparents and Special friends’ day at kindergarten.

**Kinder Photo Day**
A Max Amos Studio photographer will be at MECS Kindergarten to take a selection of beautiful photos of your child, capturing memories of your child's kinder year. A group photo will also be taken. Please take note of the following dates and times for your child's group. Some weeks later you will have the opportunity to purchase photos from a proof sheet. You can look at their products on their website [www.maxamosphotography.com.au](http://www.maxamosphotography.com.au)

- **Possums:** Mon March 24 9-12pm
- **Bluebirds:** Tues March 25 9-12pm
- **Koalas:** Wed March 26 9-12pm
- **Rosellas:** Thurs March 27 9-12pm

**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.

Finally, we welcome Lynda Barendregt back as our Playgroup leader. Lynda brings a wealth of knowledge to the team, having been in this role a few years ago at MECS.

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*
The 4 year old children have been exploring their sense of belonging at kindergarten as they get to know their educators, space and playmates. 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 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.

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 and outer space! (Not that anyone went visiting to planets, but some did go to the beach!)

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, Robyn, Cherie and Andrea-4 year old program educators**

**Bluebirds and Rosellas News**

The 3 year olds have started the year fabulously. They are already used to the routines of washing hands, snack time, putting on art smocks and sitting with crossed legs on the mat! We have been singing a special hello song which helps the children to introduce themselves to friends and say hello. Looking at the friend when they do this is a part of their social development. The song goes like this:

Rosella, rosetta high up in the tree, can you say your name to me?
(Child says) "My name is. ........."
(Everyone responds) "Hello ........."

From Feb 20, we will be learning colours, and then we’ll move into the wonderful story of Noah’s ark and the rainbow. It would be great if you could dress your child in the colour for the day (as shown below) - either fully in the colour or just one item of their clothing, such as socks.

**Colour dates to remember:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 20 Feb</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 25 Feb</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 27 Feb</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 4 Mar</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 6 Mar</td>
<td>Rainbow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lee and Karen-3 year old program Educators**
It’s very exciting for me to come back to Busy Bees and be able to work in the Kinder room, and also to meet and work alongside parents and their beautiful children. All the children were excited as they came along to Busy Bees - some returning from last year and others entering a new experience. I encourage all the parents to get to know each other in their session – it makes for an enjoyable time together. The children have already enjoyed making painting masterpieces - for some it was their first painting experience. Singing is also something they do very well – the mums are not bad either!

*Lynda – Playgroup Leader*

Blessings from all of the Kindergarten Staff,

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