Dear Milford Lodge Families & Friends,

Happy New Year! Welcome to all of our new families, and also to our returning families, some of which are returning after a few years away. Our first few weeks have been so beautiful and calm, with so many children running in at full speed, and just so excited to be back and see all of their friends. Within the first fortnight our regular outings are already back into full swing, and we have already enjoyed a week of pony rides on Macca, caring for our furry & feathered friends, assisted the kitchen every day and loads more!

We would also like to wish our 'preppies' all of the very best as they commence their first year of formal school. Hopefully over the years they will remember to come and visit us ☺

Thanks for reading

X Team Milford

www.milfordlodge.com.au

Team Milford

(2018)

Approved Provider: Jumofini Pty Ltd (Justin & Molly Stewart)
Nominated Supervisor: Molly Stewart
Educational Leader / Supervisor: Nancy Andrews

Avocado Cottage
Alyssa Randall
Serena How
Karen Bird
Sharna Ward

Art Shed
Marianne Tiffney
Louise Stickland
Mayumi Katsumura
Carmel Schalken

Chefs
Ravena Ingham
Amy Jervis

School House
Migi Lee
Sue Alderson
Emily Kennedy
Ann Wilkins

Library
Mary Leonardo
Chay Scott
Pristine Amrock
Susan Forrest

Ballroom – Tegan Avolio

Forest – Jayne Hurd

Tiffany Hawke
Isabella Turner
Sharon Knight
Megan Mackie

School Based Trainees
Molly Bale
Tyleia Marsay
Olivia Caddy

Relief
Molly Fisher
Anna (Qian) Sun
Milli Hurd
Alison Stevenson

Wandiny

Team News

We would like to start by welcoming Tiffany, Chay & Emily to Milford Lodge and also welcome Carmel back from Victoria. Tiffany has just completed ten years of service with another Early Childhood Service and is very excited to be joining us in the beautiful environment we have to play in here. Chay is currently studying her Bachelor of Early Childhood and already has a few years experience working in Kindergarten.

Emily is a qualified Early Childhood Teacher, only just fresh off the plane from the UK. Emily impressed the socks off us by flying all the way over just for the interview and trial (returning home for dance recital, and then returning to start the year). Emily has been dancing for years and so is obviously excited by the fact that Milford Lodge has its very own ballroom.

We wish Suzie and her family all the best on the arrival of their new baby in the next few months, and would like to thank Suzie for joining the Library Team in 2017.

Molly Fisher is looking forward to starting her studies in nursing, however will still be a part of our Milford family as relief.

Congratulations to Lucy, Jade and Makayla on the completion of their School Based Traineeships with us at Milford Lodge. We wish them all the very best as they start their next adventures.

Tegan is expanding her own business and so will only be with us on Mondays and Fridays to start this year. Whilst it is sad that we only have her 2 days, we are excited to watch her tackle the business world. We're sure she will do well!

Educational Program & Practice in 2018

By Nancy Andrews

Every teacher, every caregiver, holds in his or her hands the power to shape a child's entire future
~Pam Schiller

As we have many new families join us this year we thought we would share an overview of our spaces and Educational Program and Practice.
We are very proud of our Excellent rating awarded in June 2016. The Excellent rating is the highest rating an education and care service can achieve under the National Quality Framework.
The awarding of the Excellent rating by ACECQA indicates that a service is embracing continuous quality improvement and practice, and are evolving over time to improve outcomes for children and families at the highest level. It also recognises providers who are champions of quality improvement, innovative leaders beyond the service, and are raising the bar on quality education and care for Australian children. There are over 15,000 Early Childhood Services in Australia and less than 50 had been awarded this accolade in 2016 at the time we received ours.

The beginning of each year is when we generally have a transition to different rooms for some children and staff. This time coincides with the Kindergarten children starting prep. Some families may only be familiar with the traditional concept of children "moving up"' to different rooms at the beginning of each year based on their date of birth. Over the past 3 years we have trialled allocating "Home Rooms" to children based on where the child chooses to spend the majority of their time whilst here and we also try to place siblings in the same room unless one happens to be in the Avocado Cottage or enrolled in the kindergarten program. It is not unusual for some children and staff to stay in a particular room for up to two years either so please don't be concerned that your child (for example) "wasn't ready" if they have stayed in the same room. Our whole team has truly embraced this practice and we delight in seeing first hand on a daily basis the improved outcomes for children this practice brings.

Our aim is after consulting with families and initially allocating your child a "homeroom" where they place their belongings each morning. Children will be assisted to settle in and form relationships with the 4 staff allocated to each of these rooms as well as the other children of course. These carers will get to know your child extremely well and will share information on a daily basis with you regarding their sleep, appetite, friendships or which experiences they have joined in with on a particular day. We anticipate that throughout the year a small number of children may gravitate to other rooms based on their interests and friendships. If this happens we do of course offer flexibility for homerooms to be changed.

All children are supported to pursue their own passions and interests, to play, explore, invent, question and communicate in productive collaboration with others in an environment designed to act as the '3rd teacher'
(Ceppi & Zini 1998)

At the start of each year we try to ensure that at least one carer from each room transitions to the next room with the children. We were able to facilitate this for the majority of children this year apart from the small number of children transitioning to the Art Shed from School House. To compensate for this, we asked Molly Fisher to work for the first couple of days before enrolling in her nursing degree, which was a great help. Molly will continue to do relief work throughout the year with us too.

<u>Room Names</u>

Avocado Cottage: this beautiful room is the homeroom of our youngest babies from 6 weeks of age. It is now very normal to have older siblings and ''helpers'' spend time in this room, which is always lovely to observe. There is no upper age limit when babies transition to other rooms, consideration is given to their development needs as well as gaining an insight into which space they are drawn to when they grow in confidence to explore and connect with others throughout the day.

School House: many of our older families will be familiar with this room been called Toddler House for a number of years before reverting back to its original name last year. This room caters for older infants from 15months that generally only have one daily sleep. As with every child, sleep and rest will be offered whenever a child requires one. This room is home to a vast array of role play resources including a home corner, dress up etc. It also has its own art and craft area on the veranda which is a very popular place to play. Again there is no upper age limit in this room.

Wandiny: home to our large collection of wooden blocks as well as many construction /manipulative resources. This room tends to be the room that we place siblings together in if they are close in age. We have seen the benefits for families having just the one room to drop bags off and communicating with staff.
This is a mixed age room.

Art Shed: Children have free access to a large assortment of art and craft materials/clay/make your own play-dough station/jewellery making/felting/sewing etc. along with an endless supply of recycled materials to name but a few of the creative experiences on offer in this space.
This again is a mixed age room.

Library: Our Queensland Government funded Kindergarten program. This beautiful environment is our newest building having only opened in January 2017. The main aspect about delivering a Kindergarten program is that children in the year prior to prep (who will turn 4 by June 30) have access to a bachelor-qualified teacher for a minimum of 15 hours a week.
Milford Lodge is very fortunate to now have 5 Early Childhood Teachers employed in various roles throughout the service.
The library is a quiet space for reading, puzzles and board games.
We have a large collection of both fiction and non-fiction books including books in different languages.
It is the perfect location for families to enjoy sharing a book at the beginning of the day.
This room hosts a large collection of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) resources also including a light box, overhead projector, a growing collection of magna-tiles, as well as our new range of STEM wooden building blocks. The Garage (outdoor undercover area) next to the Library has a large collection of outdoor wooden blocks, loose parts as well as our woodwork and tinkering station.

The Ballroom: this stunning space is primarily used for daily music, singing and dancing experiences. Our new piano is the latest addition to this space which also hosts beautiful handmade African drums, a marimba as well as a wide variety of musical instruments.
(Children from the Art Shed and Library use this room on a daily basis to rest and sleep in too.)

The Dining Room: The very heart of Milford Lodge! Nobody can resist walking through this space of a morning attracted by the wafting aroma of our daily meals and home baking. Our chefs Ravena and Amy are more than happy to support families with their child's individual dietary needs including intolerance and allergies.
Please remember to email any dietary requirements as well as sharing these with the educators in your child's room.
The dining room is used for children's baking experiences as well as our very popular "Kitchen Hands".
This experience has grown from a child simply helping the chef by peeling stickers off a box of oranges to a daily routine of prepping the vegetables for lunch, chopping mushrooms, husking sweetcorn, top and tailing beans etc. to making the morning tea sandwiches for the whole service on a weekly basis with Molly!

Our Animals: Interactions with animals are an integral part of our Educational Program and Practice. Providing young children not just with opportunities to see and be near animals, but by giving them the chance to be actively involved in caring for animals is vitally important. I think the children who attend Milford Lodge today will hold precious memories of pony rides on Macca, collecting eggs from the chickens each morning as well as playful times with our two guinea pigs, the beautiful birds in the aviary and last but not least Lola – Molly's Boxer dog who comes for a play from time to time. A small group of children brought Lola for a walk around the neighbourhood last year and we had lovely comments from parents thanking Molly for allowing their children to do such "normal" things whilst attending day care. It is unique opportunities like this that make Milford Lodge such a special place.

Documentation:

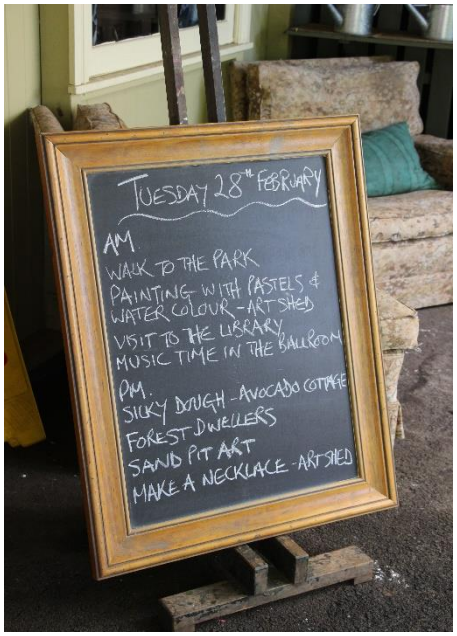
I loved reading the rich and meaningful documentation that was sent home to families last year. Children in Avocado Cottage & School House will continue to have an A4 display "Magical Moments" folder capturing their wow moments and developmental milestones.

Our documentation for our older 3 rooms will be in the form of Australian Learning Tracks Framework as well as Learning Stories and the use of Project Books were children's voices and ideas are recorded and educators document their plans to scaffold children's learning.

Learning stories will be emailed home as they occur. For example, a small group outing or an experience your child has participated in on a particular day. Each room will keep a record of Learning Stories sent to families so please let us know if you are not receiving anything so we can follow it up. Can I suggest that you create a folder on your computer to save all the documentation relating to your child's year at Milford Lodge. At the end of the year you could always print this out if you wish for those who like a tangible record of their child's year. I really feel that this approach suits Milford Lodge's ethos of spending more quality time with children as opposed to sitting in a back office typing on a computer about them and decorating a scrap book of their artwork gathered over the year.

All rooms will choose a selection of photos taking over the week to compile a weekly news email, which will be forwarded to families on a Friday afternoon making visible the fun and learning that has occurred across the week.

Educators will collect and gather information on individual children. All educators in the service will be encouraged to contribute to this ensuring we gather multiple perspectives of your child. At the end of each term educators from each room will be responsible for putting together an individual summative assessment ensuring that everything that has been collected is analyzed in relation to the Learning Outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework. Examples of information gathered will be jottings, photos, anecdotal observations, learning stories, samples of your child's work and information shared by the child's family.



Molly came up with the wonderful idea a couple of years ago of having a black board outside with planned experiences on offer on a daily basis. Families are encouraged to read the board with their child and perhaps let someone know at drop off time which experiences their child would like to participate in. Educators will discuss with children over morning tea the different experiences on offer on that particular day and support them to try different things.

Although we ensure we verbally communicate to families on a daily basis and offer 1:1 private conversations whenever needed we would like to dedicate the first week of the school holidays each term to setting aside time for you to come in and meet with your child's career's to discuss your child's learning and development. Last year we printed a roster for parents to choose a suitable time slot for them to have this conversation so we will continue to implement this practice. You may wish to make a note in your diary that week beginning 3rd of April will be when we offer these 1:1 conversations. I am also always available for a chat to discuss any questions you may have regarding our Educational Program and Practice. I am here Tuesday – Friday so feels free to email me to arrange a suitable time.

Professional Development

October ~ November ~ December

- **Peter Gray (USA):**
- **Educational Leadership Sunshine Coast "Play" Conference at St Andrews**
- **Preparing students for the "New Work Order" – Breaking the Mould of Traditional Education for Teachers and Students**
- **Autumn Online Summit: Physical Development**
- **Webinar: Changes to the National Quality Framework**
- **Cultural Competencies**
- **Workshop with Sue Inglis at Milford Lodge**
- **Staff Catch up: Reflections on 2017 – Looking forward to 2018**

Holiday Workers

Thank you for all of the compliments on our environment.
One family said that in the three years they have been here, the most (big) changes have occurred in the past 12 months, and that they were amazed at how much had been done.

~

Most families will have noticed the newly renovated cubby house.
"*This big, long ramp wasn't here before. I love it*" – Hunter
"*Who Built this?*" – Charlotte, "*I love that Justin built this for us!*"
"*How did he build the door?*" – Braxton
We have plans to continue work in this area, extending the asphalt as well as adding a soft fall area to be able to incorporate some monkey bars from the side of the bottom landing.

We had some help this year from STFI (Specialist Timber Floor Installations). Our ballroom floor had not been revarnished in over a decade. Peter & Lee have done a fabulous job and the floor looks amazing. We would highly recommend STFI ☺

~

Our car park is obviously under construction. This is part of the larger plan to incorporate a new kitchen and dining room toward the 'out' driveway of Milford Lodge. This will also become the new main entrance to the service once complete.

~

Milford Lodge Community Market Day

Saturday 7th October 2017

Market Day was created in 2009, for an assignment by a team member studying at the time. An assignment on sustainability.

Money was never part of the original plan, which was actually just about creating a fun day with and for the children – all from items which could be donated.

Now having shared in seven amazing Milford Market Days, I would hope that the assignment received top grades!

It is difficult to explain the day as a volunteer, until you have experienced it for yourself. The excitement amongst the children, the staff and the families builds for months.

The day itself is almost a blur, going at whirlwind pace, with everyone being fairly well exhausted at the end of it all. But every single person who puts in that time and effort, says it is worth every second. I am so proud at the end of each Market Day, to have been a part of a team who have all given their time, their ideas, and their effort to create something amazing for the children and the families, and who actually look forward to the next Market Day, with ideas already brewing as soon as the day is over.

2017 was a special year for us, with funds raised going to a project run by Samara Welbourne, who finished at Milford Lodge at the end of 2005.

Thanks to everyone who shared in another awesome day – looking forward to Market Day 2018! ☺

Hi Molly, Margie and the wonderful Milford Family,

For over 20 years I have been driving in and out of your driveway on a daily basis – dropping off my four fabulous boys at various stages of their formative years.

So many memories and special moments are held close to my heart, and when people comment on how "respectful, decent, polite and considerate" my boys are – I always credit this to Milford Lodge.

Remember when Saxon was just 3 and he was always first in line to ride your pony Pete. Well you will be pleased to know that while his love affair with horses started at Milford, he leaves us this week headed for the Outback – he was chased by three big cattle stations after finishing school in December. He's chosen to defer University for a year to work for Gina Rinehart – mustering at on one of Kidman and Co.'s largest properties. We're immensely proud of him.

*There are so many stories I could share about the Milford influences, for each of the boys. With our youngest, Sheldon, starting prep this year it's very hard to say goodbye to you guys. I will miss pick-up time the most, and hearing their stories of adventure and discovery (your Indigenous focus makes me so proud), I will miss the dancing, music and songs, I will miss washing the red soil from between their toes in the evening…***the grubbier their feet, the better the day I say ☺**

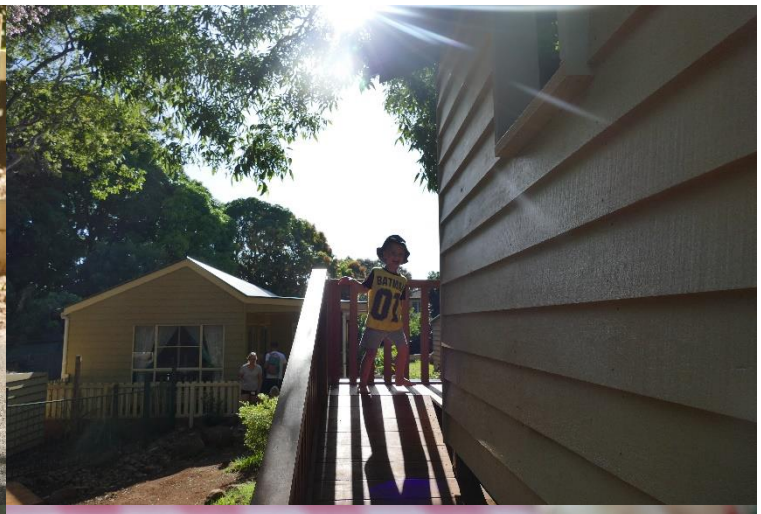
You have given my boys the most solid foundation, more than I could have ever asked for – and the most important one, you have taught them to BE KIND. Thank you for encouraging my boys to be confident within themselves and to be respectful of people, animals and our precious planet too. These are enduring traits which will carry them through the ups and downs of life.

With love and absolute appreciation: ***there's no place like MILFORD.***

Paula Hay

Thank you Paula xx Molly, Margie & all of the Milford Team over the past few decades! You will be missed x

Thanks again to the Man in the Big Red Suit for coming along on our last day of 2017. He was awesome!

Thank you to everyone for coming along to help celebrate our children finishing their year with us in the Library, ready for the transition to school ☺

Happy Snaps – January 2018