Learning about the creatures of the ocean

By Sonia Spoad

This week our Possums have been having some interesting discussions about ocean dwelling animals. We have discussed which animals are land dwelling and which are ocean dwelling just to be clear that we know where our favourite animals reside. The crocodile and alligator are tricky since they favour both environments as do penguins and ducks... but it’s fun trying to work it all out.

We froze some sea animals (plastic ones!) in containers using coloured water. We emptied them into a container and set about trying to crack the ice with plastic spoons, utensils and a wooden rolling pin. We noticed that the ice was very hard!!! Eventually it MELTED and we saw animals appearing... like a chilly treasure hunt!!!

We all had so much fun describing what we’d found and sharing our thoughts and theories about the ice:

Oliver: “The water has frozen to make ice”
Chloe: “The ice is melting”
Alija: “I’ve found a sting ray”
Alannah: “You take a bit out, you put your hand around it and it melts”
Lucy P: “It’s heavy ... and it’s freezing cold!”
Leo: “I smashed it ....!”
Baxter: “The ice is freezing cold!!!”
Isla: “If we hold a small bit in our hand, it melts”
Tas: “Hit it harder ... break it!”
Seb: “If you leave it in the sun it might melt a bit”
As a spontaneous follow up on the Possums’ exploration of sea creatures, some of the children were invited to draw some sea creatures for our Ocean Muriel.

What learning do we think is happening here?

The possum children have independently shifted their interest and enquiry towards a new topic – sea creatures. The positive response from the educators to their interests and suggestions reinforces to the children the value of their opinion and its importance in the daily program. They are feeling valued and empowered by adult acknowledgement.

Their knowledge about the topic is recorded and discussed and then extended through art, sensory experiences and literature. The iPad also allows for another method of investigation as we google short YouTube nature videos which reinforce what we have been learning about animals and the natural environment.

What are the opportunities and possibilities for further learning?

This topic is something that can be explored over an extended period as we talk about habitats and how baby animals are born in the ocean and other environments. Are the babies born from eggs? [penguins] Are they born live? [whales] and which ocean creatures have scales? Skin? An outer skeleton, An inner skeleton? There is so much more to explore!

EYLF Learning Outcomes:

**Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners – they can develop a variety cognitive skills and processes (e.g. experimenting, investigating & hypothesising), as well as positive dispositions for learning (e.g. curiosity, creativity & enthusiasm).

**Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators, who explore and express ideas through conversation and a range of media such as art and technology.