

irresistible ideas for playbased learning

no play, no learning - know play, know learning

living eggs

day one

Living eggs is a wonderful program and opportunity we have been providing for our children at kinder over the past ten years. We order ten fertile eggs from *Living Eggs* who also provide us with an incubator, brooding box, and feed.



Gerry from *Living Eggs* arrived on Monday morning and the children watched with much interest as the incubator was carefully set up on a low table where everyone would be able to see what was going on, and the eggs were gently laid inside.

The eggs arrive at nineteen days gestation and are due to hatch at twenty-one days.

cluck, cluck mother hen....

day two

There was great excitement today when several of the eggs began pipping around lunchtime.

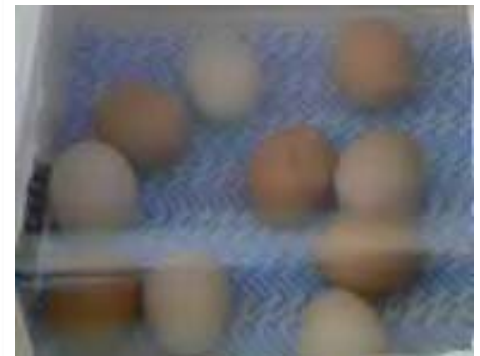
Unfortunately, as often happens, babies take a long time to be born so the hatching process moved along rather slowly and had not progressed very far by the time the children left for the day. But tomorrow promises to be a good day!

seven little chicks go cheep, cheep, cheep ...

day three

And what a day! This morning we arrived to find seven little chicks had arrived during the night. Several freshly hatched, were still covered in dander while others were very nicely dried and fluffed.

Although disappointed not to have seen the chickens hatch, the children thought they must have liked the peace and quite of the night. We think they might be right.



Over the next couple of hours we were kept posted with a running commentary by the children on the progress of the three remaining eggs, two of which the children discovered had begun pipping during the morning.

This generated lots of discussion amongst the children, from how long it would take the chickens to hatch, how tired the chicks would be when they did hatch and interest in looking for the chickens egg-tooth as they pecked away at the shell, to what colour the emerging chicks might be.

By ten o'clock two more chicks had hatched to the delight of everyone. It was such a wonderful experience for the children and a large crowd gathered around to witness the event.

The colour count was now three yellow and six brown with 'Lucky Last' egg still to make his arrival.

A few hours later we popped our nine little chicks into the brooder box and waited for 'Lucky Last' to hatch.



nine little chicks go peck, peck, peck ... day four



... and they are developing the most adorable little tail feathers too.

nine little chicks go flap, flap, flap day eight

After spending the weekend with one of our lovely pre-kinder families the chickens arrived back at kinder bigger and cuter than ever. Their wing feathers have grown...



The pre-kinder children were very excited to be able to pat and hold the little chicks today. They marveled at the softness of their down and squealed with delight as the chicks perched on their hands. They were so gentle, it was lovely to watch.

nine little chicks go flap, flap, flap ... day nine

The chickens had lots of pats and cuddles again today, this time from our kinder children. They are flapping their wings and perching on the children's arms.

One child came up with the idea they should take turns in holding the chicks by counting to ten, then passing it on to another child. The other's agreed it was a good idea and everyone was very patient waiting for their turn.

Don't you just love it when the children come up with the best ideas!

nine little chicks go scratch, scratch, scratch ... day ten

Due to the current burst of Melbourne spring weather the chickens have been enjoying some time in the glorious sunshine and fresh air in the playground.



We placed them inside a large tyre in the playground and it gives them the opportunity to scratch around, stretch their wings and legs and peck in the dirt.

It is delightful to watch how kind and gentle the children continue to be with the chickens and we heard some great language as they shared them with each other.

They have become a lot stronger and their wing feathers have grown so quickly. They are flapping around and are able to fly up and off the rim of the tyre, to the children's delight.



nine little chicks fall fast asleep ... day eleven

It is another amazing day in Melbourne.



This great spring weather means the chickens were back outside for some exercise and attention in the tyre.

Growing so quickly and still being confined to the brooder box means there isn't a lot of room to flap around so they are thriving on being outside ...

... and are so calm and relaxed around the children.

By the time they are returned to their box half an hour or so later, they are exhausted and ready to sleep.



When one decides to lie down, they all flop down together. It is just too cute!

nine little chicks go home to roost ... day twelve

Today we said goodbye to our nine adorable little chickens. Two families took some home – four little hens to one family and two hens to another who had a very broody hen waiting for them at home.

Our three remaining chickens went back to *Living Eggs* with Gerry.

We love it when families are able to take the chickens home as we look forward to seeing photos of them as they grow and getting updates on their progress. We especially like to hear when they start laying their delicious free range eggs... YUM!

Sherry and Donna, 'Irresistible ideas for play based learning'.

