

BUSH KINDER AND NATURE SCHOOL



On Bpangerang Land

Whitfield Community Childcare and Kinder



In Nature, children thrive.
This is a simple program filled with deep experiences and rich outcomes.

We see children flourishing. Our days are filled with children at their best, playing, exploring, learning, collaborating heartily.



Bush Kinder

Connecting with our local schools, we explore various natural spaces while fostering a sense of belonging that is valuable as children transition from kinder to school



Nature School

We are proud that all children up to the age of 6 can play, explore, discover and connect in natural places as part of their day at childcare.



‘Children who spend more time outdoors in nature are happier, healthier, stronger, smarter, kinder and more social’ (White, 2004)
This is what we want for our children.

We value and respect Indigenous perspectives.
Time spent outdoors supports this.

‘An outdoor classroom is a wondrous, textured, dynamic habitat for imaginative play.’

Imaginative play is the best way for children to develop language skills, learn to negotiate to with others, foster creativity, gain emotional awareness... Using natural items as props, children must work together to give meaning to these, all the while practising imagination and communication, so essential for life!



Nature time – a rich, yet simple, gift.

‘Pat the lizard, just it’s back and tail, not its head’. An onlooker would see a stick held lovingly, the middle of a group of children. To us, the world is alive and full of potential.

When nature provides the resources, Imaginations bloom. We communicate so that our friends can join our magical world, and we negotiate to co-create a game where our creativity provides endless possibilities.

With our senses reaching to the horizon, we are calm and wellbeing is nurtured. We can go slow. Our senses spark our curiosity, and we learn about the natural world through watching, exploring, asking, listening. Our learning is holistic, real and unhurried; we want to discover more.

Collaborating, we have autonomy and independence. We are trusted; we have earned that trust. We help each other and solve our own problems. Working together, we are aware of risks. We take risks, safe risks. We are learning what is safe and how to make choices that are right for us and the group. Sometimes we get a bump or a scratch. It’s a bit sore, but it’s OK; our resilience grows.

We notice our bodies; sometimes they want to climb high, to run, to jump. Sometimes we sit still, watch, listen to birds; we might draw, whittle wood, watch the water. We notice what our bodies and minds want, and we support them.

We are children and we are educators, sustained as we work with intention, awareness and respect, appreciating our time in nature.

Unhurried time in nature; what a basic concept, what a deep experience!



Early Childhood Education is guided by the Early Years Learning Framework.

This framework recognises five important areas for children to grow, learn, and flourish.

Identity: Children have a strong sense of identity



Community: Children are connected with and contribute to their world



Wellbeing: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing,



Learning: Children are confident and involved learners.



Communication: Children are effective communicators.



Setting a high benchmark for our children's growth, the National Quality Framework informs quality early childhood education.

Being outdoors invites exploration, curiosity, and creativity, providing stimulation and calmness as suits each child. (Quality Area 1)

Health, safety and wellbeing is supported as children work to discover and assess risks, safe spaces, while discovering the world around them! (Quality Area 2 and 3)

If families would rather, they can join our Nature School, accessing it as a Playgroup. Working with families and our local schools, we welcome and connect with our community. (Quality Area 6)

Risks

These spaces invite open ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education. Risks are addressed and mitigated.

Benefits

"The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the National Quality Framework (NQF) acknowledge the critical importance of outdoor play for young children's learning, including physical and cognitive development and wellbeing, and ability to assess risk". (Dept. of Education; Bush Kinders).

By increasing the amount of time children spend outdoors and in natural environments, bush programs can help to: Improve children's wellbeing, Physical development, Fine and gross motor skills, Core strength, Co-ordination, Balance, Eyesight and Physical endurance. Outdoors can also help to foster resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.