



Learning In and With Nature

In 2015-16 our outdoor learning area was redeveloped with funding from the SA Government POLA project promoting nature play. Our staff have undertaken considerable professional learning including attending conferences, a 6 day nature pedagogy course and a UK Study tour to ensure we can foster children's learning in and with nature.

We believe that everything we can teach inside the kindergarten is possible and can be more meaningful for children in the outdoor learning environment this includes reading, writing and mathematics.

Children will be actively engaged in all of these activities in purposeful pursuits in the outdoor environment. It is our role as teachers to seize the teachable moment and to plan for children's learning in all contexts.

We will have group times and workshops and also ensure that children have long periods of time to develop and extend their play and learning. Children will have opportunities to

- Play, share, communicate and develop friendships.
- Build, create and construct.
- Express and develop their ideas through a range of modes including the arts, design and construction.
- Develop fine motor skills
- Climb, swing and develop gross motor skills.
- Plant, grow and harvest in our gardens.
- Learn about nature, the environment & sustainability.

We know that children are highly engaged and motivated in the outdoor learning environment and that they develop strong identities as confident and capable learners.

We believe in challenging children and encouraging them to develop knowledge and understandings.

Providing rich, meaningful experiences in which children can develop fine and gross motor skills and oral language, solve problems, develop confidence, enquire and question is the most important foundation we can give them in their preschool year.

Research suggests that in the outdoor learning environment children use more language and ask more complex questions this leads them to develop better oral language which is essential to them becoming confident readers later in school.



Learning through play

Play is young children's work and research shows that children in the early years learn best through play as they are best able to make connections and build understandings. We honour the important space that is preschool and ensure learning occurs in the context of play. In play we include learning experiences targeting all areas of development including reading, writing and mathematics everyday. Young children have many years ahead of them where their learning will be more formal. In preschool we take a holistic view of learning and integrate children's learning into our teaching. We consider each child individually and set age appropriate goals embracing what each child brings to our space. In nature children play spontaneously, creatively and joyfully.

Benefit - Risk assessments

The children will be actively encouraged to challenge themselves and take risks as this promotes their sense of self as a capable learner. We work as a staff team and with the children to assess the benefits and risks of activities such as climbing, mud play, building with loose parts (sticks, pipes, pallets, boxes, tyres) and using tools. We work with the children to learn new skills, to understand and take ownership of the rules and support them in their play and when using tools. We support the children to understand the difference between taking risks, hazards, and dangerous play. As educators we remove hazards and *actively discourage DANGEROUS play*.

Learning outside all year round

We will be aiming to have the children learning in our outdoor learning space every day. However we will not be playing outside in stormy weather and on very hot or cold days there will be an option to play inside.



Families may be concerned about children playing outside in cooler weather but research shows that children who play outside regularly are actually healthier and have fewer colds and there are tremendous benefits to wellbeing of those who spend time in nature.

Busy children do not get cold playing outside and in many countries children play outside everyday even in the snow. It is however important that children are dressed appropriately for outside play with a hat and light clothing in summer and raincoat or rain suit and gumboots in winter. Staff will always help children manage their clothing to ensure they are set for play and we encourage you to pack extra clothes for them to change into if needed.

We do know it takes effort to have children dressed for outdoor play and managing sandy or muddy clothes but we believe in the benefits and hope that you will join us in encouraging the children's interest and love of learning outdoors.