



YMCA WA EARLY LEARNING CENTRES

Nurturing children in body, mind and spirit



NATURE PLAY

Benefits and what you can do.

As part of our Approach to Learning, nature play is an important and critical foundation to support your child's physical and mental development and wellbeing. Children have a natural instinct to bond with nature and living things, which encourages them to explore, discover, question and appreciate.

Children of all ages and abilities can experience nature play. Key benefits are:

1. Brings out the best in children; Nature exposes children to a variety of situations where they are forced to learn, adapt and keep their minds fresh.
2. Improves health and wellbeing; Children who play in the natural world fall sick less often. With regular exposure to the outdoors, children's immune systems are boosted along with vitamin D from the sun!
3. Super accessible; Nature play can take place anywhere... At the Early Learning Centre, the park, the beach, and your own backyard.
4. Develop social skills; Children have plenty of opportunities to interact with others. They can connect, help each other, share experiences and have fun!
5. Builds resilience; By climbing trees and other objects, children are able to fall down and get back up again, experiment, problem solve and learn from their mistakes.

References:

<https://www.natureplaywa.org.au/programs/nature-playgrounds/benefit>

https://naturalearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Benefits-of-Connecting-Children-with-Nature_InfoSheet.pdf

Activities you can do with your child in the outdoors:

0-2 year olds

- Talk about and touch different textures of seeds, nuts, leaves and flowers.
- Roll gumnuts or bigger seeds, bury them in sand and dig up again.
- Watch and listen to birds.
- Float flowers, leaves and feathers in puddles or shallow water.

3-5 year olds

- Jump and play in muddy puddles
- Organise a treasure hunt and create a map using water, seeds and sticks.
- Shake a tree gently, observe and talk about what falls on the ground.
- Make a picture frame out of sticks and create a picture inside using any natural objects around.

Did you know;

Nature's Play Week is on 17-28 April, stay tuned to see what the centre has planned!