

# Children's Services

## NATURE PLAY

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.

**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.

**References:**

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

<https://naturalearning.org>

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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