



Engaging young children in the outdoors: Nature Play

Playing outside and in nature has been a vital part of childhood for all time. Over the past 30 years, the relationship between kids and nature has radically changed, as childhood has moved indoors due to risk aversion and is now dominated by screens.

Fortunately there is a wave of new local, state, national and international efforts to reconnect young people with nature and the vital well-being benefits that nature play provides.

In the last decade in Victoria there has been a marked increase in the provision of outdoor learning for early childhood. Nature provides a wonderful array of physical challenges to test and develop motor skills, a myriad of life forms to inspire wonder and empathy and an expansive social setting where resilience and co-operation seems to be the default position. There are risks but they are not contrived and are generally obvious to the children, so they develop sound risk management skills for themselves and their group.

There is an increasing body of evidence that suggests that the rapid growth of learning in nature should continue into the future. It seems that emotional, mental and physical health outcomes are excellent and the cohort of children that grow up with nature will be inclined to take better care of our environment into the future too. Thus natural resource managers also have an important stake in encouraging the engagement of children in nature.

Join our early childhood outdoor learning forum to understand what a Bush Kinder is, why there is an increasing demand for outdoor play opportunities in natural spaces and what this means for you as a supporter.

When: Thursday 20 April 2017

Where: Cranbourne Gardens

Time: 9.30am to 4pm

Cost: \$110

Bookings: 03 5990 2200

Program

9.30 - 10.00 Tanderum Ceremony and Welcome

10.00 - 11.00 Keynote: Sam Crosby

Brief: From Landscape to Learning Space Developing relationships with Land Managers. How do we ensure that our practice can be sustained without exploitation or over impact on our learning landscapes?

How do we weigh up the benefits of learning with nature alongside the inevitable impact that will happen to our landscapes when they become outdoor classrooms? How do we unlock landscapes so that they can become learning spaces? Who are our land managers and how do we create, build and maintain a working relationship to open the doors to learning with nature.

11.00 - 11.30 Morning Tea - Barefoot networking Rockpool Waterway

11.30 - 12.30 Where is Nature Play up to in Victoria: Cecile van der Burgh

Findings from the Mapping Nature Play survey conducted in November 2016

12.30 - 1.15 Lunch provided to go. Time for a walk around the Australian Garden or the bush land

1.15 - 2.15 Land Manager and Nature Play practitioner partnerships

Narelle Debenham from Natured Kids and Tony O'Connor who is a private landholder and Land Care member talk to us about establishing a partnership, the highlights and challenges of working with children in nature.

2.15 - 3.15 Panel Forum - The next generation of Bush Custodians

Panel Chair Deb Prentice Parks Vic

Panel of 6 land managers and Nature Play practitioners discuss issues and take questions from the audience.