

April 2014 Newsletter



Hoppy Easter

From the Front Desk

Hello Parents, Grandparents and friends of Blue Gum Child Care

Easter again!!! And as per tradition, we have watched our little chicks hatch out of their eggs! It is so cute seeing our babies nervous of the little chicks, not quite sure who has more reason to be frightened!



Generally this time of year is very calm and relaxed, the children are very settled into their respective rooms and the year is moving along quite nicely. However, we are always busy at Blue Gum and this year will be no exception, although I am not certain as to when, we will soon be having our kitchen upgraded. The plans are still in the process of being finalised but expect it will not be too much longer. The centre's office will become the new kitchen and the kitchen will become our new office space. Hopefully what we are experiencing now is not the calm before the storm! I certainly hope to have the upgrades completed with as little disruption to our children, families and educators as possible.

Parents you may have noticed, and become aware that this year we have a new educational leader in Tonielle Chapple. Tonielle is very enthusiastic about this role and has already begun making some very positive changes to the curriculum. Although important, curriculum is not just about us providing written evidence of meeting the 5 learning outcomes. We want to ensure that the educators are able to spend as much time with your children as they possibly can while they interact and facilitate that learning. Intensive written documentation can be very stressful for educators to achieve each day, and it can get in the way of just "being" with the children.

Tonielle has been working on providing that happy medium of written evidence in a way that is not too stressful, yet continues with a fully comprehensive educational programme. Tonielle is concentrating on making experiences in each room very full and rich by building upon each child's learning by way of family events. This holistic approach is very enjoyable, and a fun interactive way for children to learn, please continue with your wonderful family feedback. If you would like to discuss the curriculum further, please do not hesitate to make an appointment and speak with Tonielle.

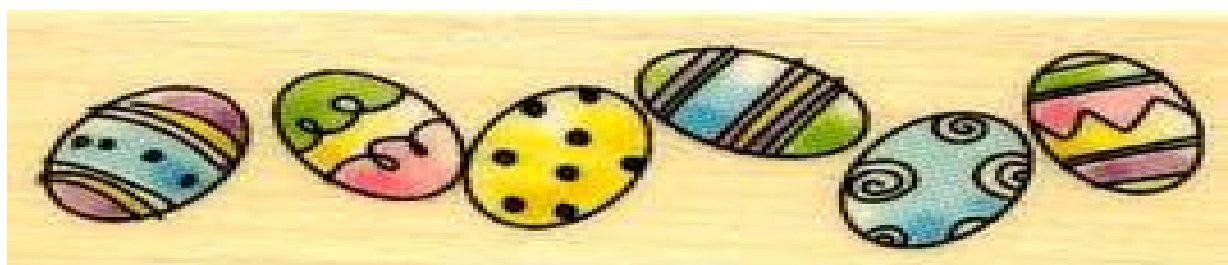
The children have been learning about sustainability as we become more aware of what we can do to be sustainable and care for the environment. Of course we have vegetables growing in our garden as well as the children becoming more conscious about conserving water. Koalas also have a worm farm happening. Coinciding with Easter I thought it might be a fantastic time to raise a couple of our chickens that have hatched and put them in our very own pen for the centre. The chickens can eat all our vegetable scraps and hopefully give us some yummy eggs. I will therefore be looking into getting a small but sturdy chicken coop. Parents if you have any ideas or can help out in any way with this I would very much appreciate your assistance.

Not too long after Easter we will be having the first of our parent evenings for this year, on the 7th of May, so please keep this date in mind. Parent evenings are a great opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress at Blue Gum. The time slots fill up very fast especially in Koalas and Wombat rooms, so to avoid any disappointment, get your name down early. Alternatively, our Educators and Early Childhood Teacher are willing to organise another convenient time, or have a phone appointment to discuss and provide feedback if necessary.

Finally I hope you have a wonderful and relaxing Easter with your families. Please take good care and stay safe!

Warm regards

Jane Brenzi



From The Joeys' Room

Hello from the Joeys' room

First of all we would like to say Happy Birthday to Ruben, Joshua and Lucinda!!



Well done to Imogen, who has just started walking.

Thank you to our lovely parents who have sent in family photos, your children love looking at them.

Everyone has settled in so well. Your babies are all exploring and happily interacting with each other and we are thoroughly enjoying the time we have with them.

We are all sitting at the table for all our meals and coping very well. (A little messy at times though! 😊)

Most of the babies are attempting to feed themselves.

Please could you label your child's belongings as it makes it so much easier to return the items to the correct person.

That's all for now.

Julie, Diane and Jeni





From the Possums' Room

To all the Possums Parents,

All the possums have settled into the room beautifully and are comfortable in our routines. We have started sending out the emails with our Daily Curriculum, if you are having problems getting them, please let us know.

Thank you to the families who have participated by filling in the Weekend sheets. This information helps us to extend the children's interests at Blue Gum. From this input, we are able to give the children activities which interest them. They have enjoyed painting and gluing. The children especially enjoy feeling different textures and making a "mess" with paint! So far, we have discussed colours and shapes. Their favourite shape is a star!

We are also singing a lot of songs like "Twinkle, twinkle little star" and another favourite: "The Wheels on the Bus"!

Please be sure to bring jacket or jumper as the weather has got cooler in the last few weeks. Please also label all your child's belongings.

Thank you.
Motoko and Qamar



From the Wombats' Room

Hi everybody!

Well winter is coming and hopefully we are going to be having a proper cold winter.

Please start to either dress your children in warm winter clothes or or make sure they have spare clothing in their bag - this includes jumpers. Please make sure all your child's clothes are **labelled** clearly as this makes our jobs much easier 😊 .

We have quite a few children that are starting to toilet train. If you think your child is ready and wish to start toilet training, please bring in about 4 or 5 pairs of knickers or jocks and the same amount of pants.

Even though its winter your child still needs to have a water bottle. Please make sure your child brings one in and that it is **labelled** clearly with their name.

The chickens have been a massive hit with the children and they are learning to be very gentle and quiet when they hold and touch them.

Happy birthday wishes to our little Wombats who celebrated their birthdays in March and April.

Have a safe and happy Easter

Tonielle, Katherine and Paige x



From the Koalas' Room

Hello Families!

We hope you are all well and looking forward to Easter and the upcoming school holidays. Hasn't this first term gone really quickly? Well as usual we have been super busy over the last month or so.



We really enjoyed our excursion on the Fire Engine with fireman Kevin back in February and we certainly hope the children did too. As well as the Fire Engine, we also had fun with Crazy Hair Day and wearing Green for St Pat's day. All the Koalas loved watching Lesley have her hair done and we

send out a big warm THANK YOU for all your kind donations.



Next week we have Easter to look forward and the children LOVE the 'Chickens You Can Hatch'. We have spent a lot of time talking about chickens and their life cycle. It has been fascinating watching them hatch and grow it to fluffy little chicks. We hope you all have some wonderful holidays over the Easter and Anzac Day break and we can't wait to hear all about your children's adventures.

We have had great feedback from the Koalas about how much they enjoyed wearing green for St Pat's day and they have been asking what colour is next and what day they have to wear it. So we were thinking over the next few months we will have a colour days. To start the fun off the children have requested to wear **Orange**, on Wednesday the 16th please

send you child in to Koalas in orange clothing ☺ in May we shall be moving

on to the colour **Yellow** on Thursday the 15th of May.

We also have our first Parent night for the year on Wednesday the 7th May. The list will go on our door in the next few weeks and if you would like to have a sit down meeting with myself, Meagan and Alice, please add your names. As usual we will also be sending out your children's report cards so if you can't make it to the parent night you still have a little something from us to know the progress of your child's time in Koalas.

On Wednesday the 21st of May we also have our Dream Time Indigenous Cultural Infusion Incursion. The Koalas and the Wombats simply loved it last year, and we can't wait to have them back again this year.

As usual we continue to ask for any family input, if your children in interested in anything please get us know. From a story they like to read, if they like watching the rain or if they find snails fascinating. If you have anything coming up that we could also add to our interactive calendar we would love to hear about it, again anything from haircuts, dentist trips or holidays.

Happy Birthday to Oliver, Amelia S, Ayla, Matilda, Meagan, Ryan, Josephine and Cian who have all had birthdays or have birthdays coming up.

Well that's it, thanks for all your input with the curriculum and keep it coming!

Rachel, Meagan, Alice and Mel ☺



From Our Educational Leader

Hello Families!

The past month has seen several changes to the way we deliver our curriculum and happily our educators have found more time to create exciting experiences that they can participate in with the children. We can now focus on being with the children more and this leads to more intentional teaching on topics that are directly related to your child's interests! Each room now has a **Learning Journey Board**, this is where you can find information and photos about activities, children's observations and their Learning Stories. The **Daily Journal** entry is being displayed and emailed to you, this contains the basic rundown of the group's day, the activities offered and references to Learning Journeys that have taken place, plus any housekeeping messages from the rooms educators. The amount of Family Input we have received from you has been absolutely fabulous and the children and educators alike are revelling in these opportunities to learn and share knowledge about topics that have real meaning to us all.

Here are some of the Journeys we have experienced so far...

One of the Joeys has been playing golf at home, so Julie took our golf set out for him and he was so excited to show her how to use them. His confidence with these tools and the excited way he communicated with Julie was very special and their happiness over sharing this was infectious!

Planning from some Family Input in the Possums room Qamar gave the children seeds to throw to the birds while they talked about the different Australian natives. They met a crow and several magpies who were investigating the seeds and Qamar spoke to the children about how the birds search for their food. The children loved this activity and were so curious as they repeated new words and concepts.

In the Wombats we learned that one of our children had been to Yum Char with their extended family. That day we set up our own Yum Char restaurant complete with bamboo steamers, dumplings, chopsticks and a storybook. We were able to name some of the food items we were eating because they were labelled in the book and the children were eager to explore these words in Chinese. It was a lovely way to

celebrate another culture and broaden our understanding of the world around us.

The Koalas Learning Journeys have really taken off over the past few weeks. They have had so many Family and Child initiated interests to explore! One of note was a focus on baking that had come from a Koala helping in the kitchen at home. Over two weeks the Koalas made chocolate muffins and then gingerbread people with "The Gingerbread Man" storybook being read several times. These activities lent their way to discussions about healthy eating and safety in the kitchen and the children thoroughly enjoyed taking their treats home to share with their loved ones.

Please feel free to ask me or any of the other educators any questions you may have or for any further clarification regarding our new curriculum structure. It's under construction and we are reflecting and making small changes everyday to provide the best possible experience for your child, their educators and Blue Gum families. We welcome and truly value your feedback. Oh, and make sure you take a look at the Learning Journey Boards with your child, I'm sure they have lots to tell you about the new things they are learning 😊

Warm Regards,
Tonielle
Educational Leader



The Story of Easter and Easter Eggs

Easter Egg Tradition

Eggs have been associated with the Christian festival of Easter, which celebrates the death and resurrection of Christ, since the early days of the church. However, Christian customs connected with Easter eggs are to some extent adaptations of ancient pagan practices related to spring rites.

The egg has long been a symbol of 'fertility', 'rebirth' and 'the beginning'. In Egyptian mythology, the phoenix burns its nest to be reborn later from the egg that is left; Hindu scriptures relate that the world developed from an egg.

With the rise of Christianity in Western Europe, the church adapted many pagan customs and the egg, as a symbol of new life, came to represent the Resurrection. Some Christians regarded the egg as a symbol for the stone being rolled from the sepulchre.

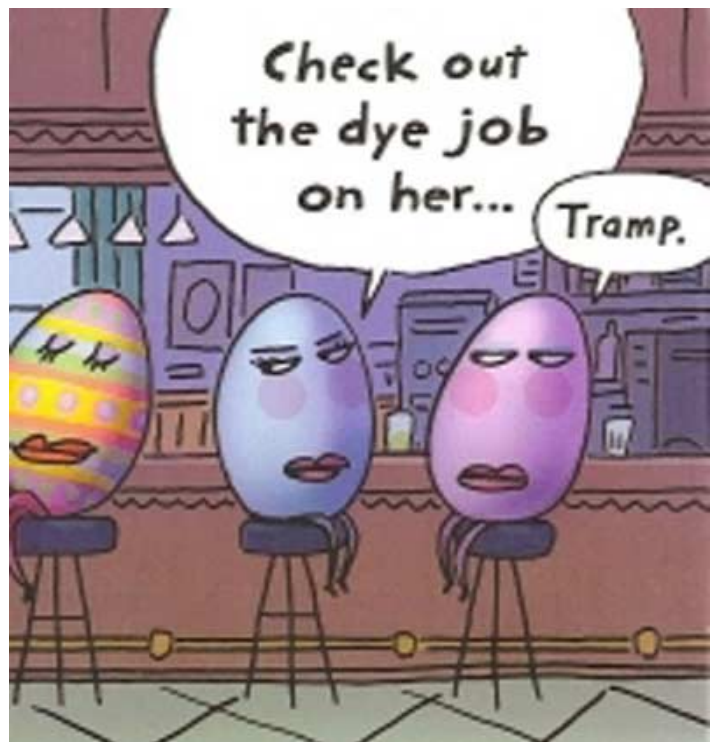
Eggs as an Easter Gift

The earliest Easter eggs were hen or duck eggs decorated at home in bright colours with vegetable dye and charcoal. Orthodox Christians and many cultures continue to dye Easter eggs, often decorating them with flowers.

The 17th and 18th centuries saw the manufacture of egg-shaped toys, which were given to children at Easter. The Victorians had cardboard, 'plush' and satin covered eggs filled with Easter gifts and chocolates. The ultimate egg-shaped Easter gifts must have been the fabulous jeweled creations of Carl Fabergé made during the 19th century for the Russian Czar and Czarina, now precious museum pieces.

Chocolate Easter eggs were first made in Europe in the early 19th century, with France and Germany taking the lead in this new artistic confectionery. Some early eggs were solid, as the technique for mass-producing moulded chocolate had not been devised. The production of the first hollow chocolate eggs must have been painstaking, as the moulds were lined with paste chocolate one at a time.

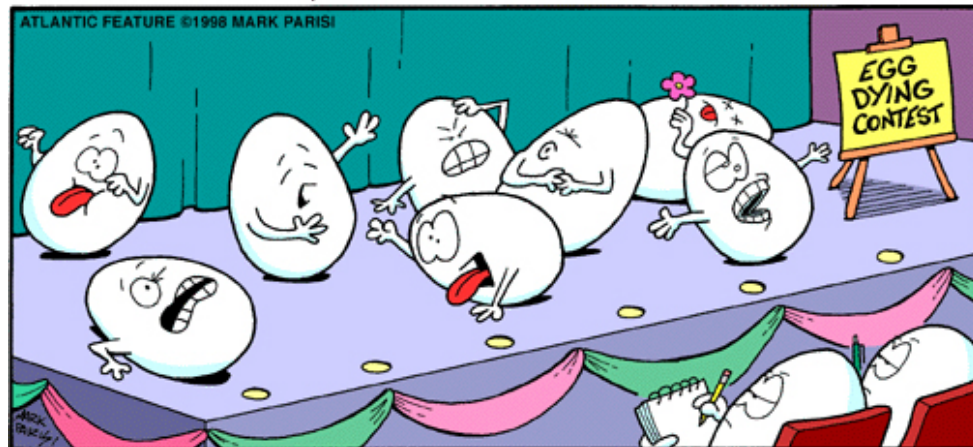




off the mark

by Mark Parisi

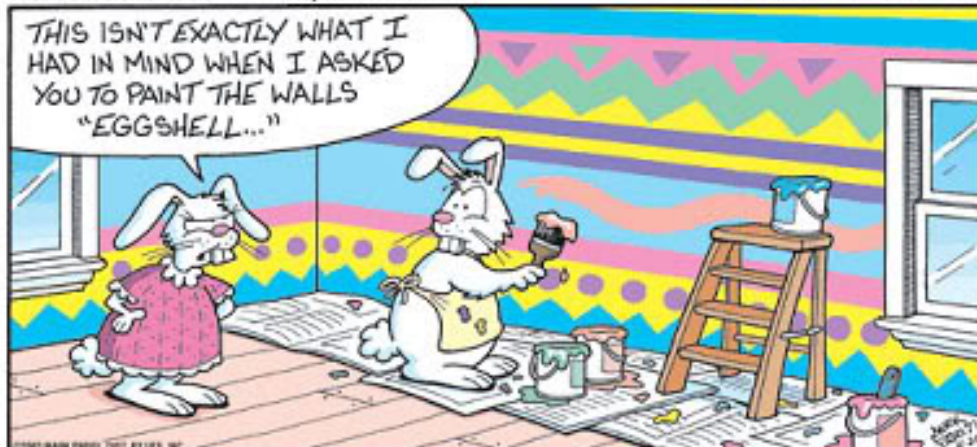
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by Mark Parisi

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How to Put a Toddler to Bed in 100 Easy Steps

1. Announce that it's time to go to bed.
2. Wait for your toddler to stop crying.
3. Explain that bedtime is not a punishment.
4. Explain that bedtime is not a new concept.
5. Explain that, yes, bedtime will happen every night.
6. Console your toddler.
7. Announce that it's still bedtime.
8. Let your toddler know that we don't call names in this house.
9. Tell your toddler it's time to go upstairs.
10. Watch your toddler move at a snail's pace.
11. Wait for your toddler to stop crying.
12. Pick up your toddler.
13. Walk your toddler upstairs.
14. Pick out the wrong pair of pyjamas for your toddler.
15. Pick out another wrong pair of pyjamas for your toddler.
16. Explain that the right pair of pyjamas is in the wash.
17. Explain that you will not be doing a load of laundry this evening.
18. Console your toddler while he/she cries.
19. Explain that in this house we don't call names.
20. Watch your toddler struggle to get into his/her pyjamas.
21. Ask your toddler if you can help.
22. Continue watching your toddler struggle.
23. Watch your toddler try to wear a pair of pants like a shirt.
24. Console your toddler.
25. Put the wrong pair of pyjamas on your toddler.
26. Announce that it's time to brush teeth.
27. Explain the benefits of dental hygiene.
28. Console your toddler.
29. Carry your toddler into the bathroom.
30. Put a microscopic amount of toothpaste (poison) onto the toddler toothbrush.
31. Wet toothbrush.
32. When your toddler opens his/her mouth 1/45th of an inch wide, attempt to clean teeth.
33. Your toddler will attempt to spit in the sink, but will actually spit on the counter. Clean it up.
34. Console your toddler.
35. Ask your toddler to pick out two books.
36. Toddler will pick out the two longest books in your home.
37. Read the first line of every third page of the two books.
38. Field unrelated questions and interruptions.
39. Tell toddler it's time for a good night kiss.
40. Toddler will be suddenly and urgently thirsty, give toddler a small drink of water.
41. Toddler will ask a question. Answer question.



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"Peas porridge in the pot nine days old.
That's like the time Mom was away and left
you in charge of the kitchen for two weeks!"

42. Say "good night" and kiss toddler.
43. Toddler will ask for a hug. Hug toddler.
44. Toddler will take up a sudden interest in potty training and ask to use the bathroom. It's poop.
45. Help toddler in the bathroom. Notice that there is no poop.
46. Toddler may become afraid. Assure toddler that there is nothing to be afraid of.
47. Toddler will ask a question about life. Answer question.
48. Toddler will need another hug and kiss. Give hug and kiss.
49. Toddler needs to urinate. Help toddler in the bathroom. Notice that toddler actually urinates.
50. Toddler requires a sticker for urinating successfully.
51. Put a sticker on toddler's potty chart.
52. Toddler may want to tell you a brief 10-minute story. Listen to story while backing out of the room.
53. Turn off the light.
54. Toddler remembers that he/she needs a special stuffed animal.
55. Ask where the stuffed animal is.
56. Toddler tells you it's in the car. Find your keys and look in the car. It's not there.
57. Look in the living room.
58. Look in the kitchen.
59. Look in the backyard.
60. Scout the neighbour's property.
61. Find the toy in your toddler's room, under the bed.
62. Ask toddler if he/she knew the toy was under their bed.
63. Toddler will ask for dinner. Explain to toddler that dinner ended hours ago.
64. Toddler will cry that he/she is hungry. Explain to toddler that he/she should have eaten said dinner.
65. Explain that we do not call people in this house names.
66. Toddler will ask for hug and kiss. Hug and kiss toddler.
67. Toddler will ask you to help arrange his/her pillows and blankets. Arrange pillows and blankets.
68. Toddler will ask you three essay questions. Answer them.
69. Toddler will notice that the tag end of the blanket is next to his/her face and will kick it off. Fix blanket, this time with care and precision.



"No, I don't know if the Gingerbread man was gluten-free."

70. Toddler will ask for the hall light on. Turn on the hall light.
71. Toddler will ask for another story. Explain that there will be no more stories.
72. Toddler will ask what the plan for tomorrow is. Resist the urge to say, "I won't be here. I'm running away tonight."
73. Tell toddler "good night."
74. Toddler will say his/her back, legs or butt is itchy.
75. At your discretion, try to relieve itchiness through lotion or wipes.
76. Put toddler back in bed.
77. Arrange blanket in the proper formation.

78. Say good night.
79. Toddler will say "good night."
80. As you reach the door, toddler will inform you that he/she is not wearing socks.
81. Choose the wrong pair of socks for your toddler.

82. Choose another wrong pair of socks for your toddler.
83. Choose the right pair of socks for your toddler.
84. Put the right pair of socks the wrong way on your toddler's feet.
85. Put the right pair of socks the wrong way on your toddler's feet.
86. Get the right pair of socks the right way on your toddler's feet.
87. Use your last thread of energy to stand.
88. Say "good night."
89. Toddler will say "good night."
90. As you leave the room, toddler will ask for a sip of water with pathetic sad look on face.
91. Give toddler sip of water and beg to be released from this Hades.
92. Toddler will ask for a back rub/tapping.
93. Tap toddlers back until you lose feeling in your arm and your toddler seems tired.
94. Slowly stop tapping. Stand up. Try to float out of the room.
95. Toddler will look at you. Say, "It's time to go to bed."
96. If toddler cries, pretend to be serious this time.
97. Say "good night."
98. Act like you're walking downstairs but just linger by the door, out of sight.
99. Pray.
100. Walk downstairs.



From Maggie Dent



There is clear and consistent evidence about the many benefits for children and the wider community from exposure to and engagement with nature. Internationally, many public and private playground providers are moving to enhance playground provision by including planted landscapes and/or natural play elements into playground designs – or by giving children opportunities to play in natural semi-wild spaces.

What the research says:

- Children who play regularly in natural settings are sick less often. Mud, sand, water, leaves, sticks, pine cones and gum nuts can help to stimulate children's immune system as well as their imaginations.
- Children who spend more time outside tend to be more physically active and less likely to be overweight.
- Children who play in natural settings are more resistant to stress; have lower incidence of behavioural disorders, anxiety and depression; and have a higher measure of self-worth.
- Children who play in natural settings play in more diverse, imaginative and creative ways, and show improved language and collaboration skills.
- Children who play in nature have more positive feelings about each other.
- Bullying behaviour is greatly reduced where children have access to diverse nature-based play environments.
- Symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder are reduced after contact with nature.

Source: <http://www.kidsafewa.com.au/naturalplay.html>

There appears to be a serious gap occurring in modern childhood, which is delaying emotional and social development. This has a lot to do with the changing nature of childhood today. The excess consumer-driven pressures on parents to buy toys and 'stuff' to make their children smart has, in part, invalidated the magic that is wired into children that leads them to find their own fun. Just because a product has 'educational'

written on its packaging, does not mean that it has any more educational value than a basket of clothes pegs or a set of car keys to a young toddler!

So many parents tell me they are too busy to create opportunities for their children to play mindfully and deeply, especially outside in the natural world.

"Having sufficient time to play is important – big blocks of time without being disturbed and made to hurry – is important for children and adults. We need time to chill out, relax, to let our ideas flow, have conversations with real or imaginary friends, to test our ideas and theories and replay, retest and rethink them." — Neville Dwyer, 'Adventurous Play – Developing a culture of risky play' documentary (Early Childhood Australia)

Play is a much underrated but incredibly vital part of children's development. Put simply "play grows the brain". As Hara Estroff Marano highlighted in her book, *A Nation of Wimps* (2008):

"Play fosters maturation of the very centres of the brain that allows kids to exert control over retention, emotions and to control behaviour. This is a very subtle trick that nature plays – it uses something that is not goal directed to create the mental machinery for being goal directed."

The principal of one of the schools that have introduced two nature play areas – one for K-2 and one for Years 3 and above - has found students' playground behaviour has improved noticeably with students playing together more, cooperating in their play, being more engaged in their play, taking more risks and being calmer in classrooms. This physical activity actually improves self-regulation and concentration and so learning is improving. Bullying and truancy has decreased and students are much more enthusiastic to get to school on time! Another great gift that has happened is that parents and teachers have worked together positively to create these playgrounds and so school culture has also become more cohesive and cooperative.

We should always keep in mind that playgrounds are for children and children become massively engaged in nature-based playgrounds compared to those playgrounds designed by adults. It stands to reason why we need more of them and less of those brightly coloured adult-designed fantastic plastic modern playgrounds.

Play boosts brain power

High-quality play experiences definitely contribute to better cognitive development in children and they promote problem-solving, creativity, initiative and can increase children's ability to concentrate. What is most exciting about nature-based playgrounds is that every time a child visits the playground s/he can interact and play in a completely different way to how they played previously. One of the key benefits of natural playgrounds is that they tend to assist with development of better gross motor skills like climbing. Anything that counteracts the increasing passivity of today's children has to be a winner.

The brain needs movement to grow brain power.

The key characteristics of a natural playground are:

- the use of natural products like sand, water, logs and rocks
- differing heights and levels of the ground - kids love hills
- they allow children the opportunity to investigate and explore freely
- there is no fixed purpose to achieve
- some are hidden areas behind shrubs or small barriers
- bridges or walkways that take children from one place to another
- tunnels - kids love tunnels
- waterways - these are purely magical to children, not just to look at but to interact with
- opportunities for children to climb and to swing with their body weight
- spaces to run freely
- the ability to move things around
- no pressure to keep things neat and tidy
- a suspension of time constraints.

[Claire Warden](#) is one of the world's leading advocates for nature play for children. She is passionate about the benefits of children being immersed in nature and through her visits to Australia she has helped promote the need for outdoor play especially in early years' centres.

In Australia bush kindergartens are beginning to appear and these wonderful centres are giving young children the opportunity to massively engage in the natural world and to discover the scientist within them. There are more and more schools across Australia that are interacting with the real world with their curriculum. [Bold Park Community School](#) in Perth is one such school that uses the nearby lake as a form of classroom. Their whole school curriculum is woven closely with the natural world and real experiences. Massive immersion in the natural world in childhood not only allows children to grow healthy on all levels it allows them to develop a respectful consciousness around the environment and their place in it.

I am also sure that the return to nature-based playgrounds will enhance children's sense of belonging in our world in a deep and profound way. Mental illness has a core layer of separation, and spiritual intelligence can be nurtured by a strong connection to Nature. To create a sustainable world where all individuals value and take care of our natural resources, we need to firstly have a relationship to nature and the real world ourselves. This return to nature-based play, when coupled with initiatives like school garden projects, will create a generation of children with healthier minds, bodies, hearts and souls.



The Ode

**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.**

