



Nature Play Resource

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Care | Education | Research



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Definitions

- ‘Natural Environment’ An open air environment that does not contain man-made items or materials. For example, a dirt or grass base, not concrete or plastic; trees and plants, not slides or swings; canopy of leaves or sky, not shade-cloth.
- ‘Bush-Setting’ A natural environment where trees and undergrowth grow freely without significant management. Open areas may or may not be maintained, and access may or may not be cleared. This may include (but is not limited to) creek beds, forests, rocky outcrops and beaches.
- ‘Nature-Play’ The opportunity to play in a natural environment, without significant access to man-made resources or materials. For example, a child can make their own see-saw from a fallen log on a rock, but does not have access to a pre-fabricated one; water may be carried in buckets to a mud pit or garden bed but not to a plastic shell full of sand and toy trucks.
- ‘Outdoor Play’ Any opportunity to play in an outside area. This includes ‘nature-play’ as well as play on man-made constructions (if outside) such as a climbing structure on polymer grass, but does not include the same structures if placed in an indoor setting (such as at fast-food venues).
- ‘Bush-Group’ A group of families or an educational program (eg. kindergarten, playgroup) that meet in a bush setting to enable free, unstructured play for the children. While some care is taken to ensure child safety (such as boundaries and rules for safety), little intervention occurs by the adults in the children’s play; and few, if any, resources are provided.

How to use this resource

To assist you in finding a nature-play experience that is right for you and your child, this guide has been divided into different colours to help you.



Organised groups

- Go to the orange pages if you are seeking to participate in an outdoor experience that is supported by experienced &/or qualified staff.

Locations for independent options

- Go to the green pages if you are simply seeking ideas to assist you and your child experience nature play independently.

Ideas to prompt your child

- Go to the pink pages for some ideas that have been provided to assist you if you are asking questions such as 'how?', or "where do I start?"

The 'Organised Groups' section is further divided by age, so that you can select a group or event that suits the age of your child. Some groups have open age allowances, and so have been noted separately.



Please get in touch with us if you know of additions that might be made to the list we currently have. New groups may pop up as the word gets out!

First, let's have a chat ...

MAIN POINTS:

- Getting outside, being able to get dirty and explore their natural world no matter what the weather, is important for childrens' health and development.
- Children need opportunities to think for themselves, make mistakes and take age appropriate risks.

THE CONCERN:

- The inaugural 'Active Healthy Kids Australia Report Card' (Active Healthy Kids Australia 2014) suggests 80% of children are not getting sufficient daily exercise.
- Children are spending less time outside than ever before (Clements 2004, Christopher 2010).
- Children's use of space has changed from being primarily outdoors to indoors, and has become increasingly adult supervised (Karsten 2005).
- Children's access to public play space has declined (Wridt 2004).
- Children have less free time and spend more of the little free time they have in structured activities (Roberts, Foehr & Rideout 2006).
- The majority of children in Australia report spending more than the recommended two hours per day in front of electronic screens. (Heart Foundation 2011)
- Parental concerns are more influential than the availability of play spaces in determining children's play opportunities (Valentine & McKendrick 1997, Tandy 1999).
- Emerging evidence indicates a strong link between opportunity for nature play and positive mental health and resilience in later life. (World Health Organization, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in collaboration with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and The University of Melbourne 2004)

THE BENEFITS:

Outdoor play

1. Increases physical activity, providing opportunities to: develop muscle and heart strength; increase flexibility, and build fine and gross motor skills such as balance and coordination.
In the outdoors children can fully and freely experience: motor skills like running, leaping, and jumping; and hand-eye coordination skills like throwing, catching, and striking.
2. Enhances mental health, providing opportunities to develop self-confidence, provide 'calming' opportunities which reduce anxiety and improve mood, and improve concentration and focus.
Nature contact is positively associated with children's emotional states (Kellert 1985, Pyle 1993, Derr 2002), stress management (Wells, Evans 2003), and self-concept (Milligan & Bingley 2007, Cason & Gillis 1994).
3. Provides cognitive challenges which satisfies their interest in exploration, enhances imaginative and creative play, promotes problem solving, and helps to develop their powers of observation and their assessment of risk. Outside, children are more likely to invent games, which promotes autonomy, decision-making, resilience, organisational skills and social skills such as compromise.
4. Nature immersion assists the attention span and performance of children with Attention Deficit (and Hyperactivity) disorders (Faber-Taylor 2009, Kuo 2004).

Please note that children who abscond (ie. run away and do not return upon request) may need to be more carefully managed. For advice on this we recommend you read "Absconding Individuals: Strategies and Resources' prepared by Autism Victoria trading as Amaze. Available online at: <http://www.amaze.org.au/uploads/2012/03/Absconding-Individuals-V3-23-03-12.pdf>

THREE ATTRIBUTES FOR THE BEST NATURE PLAY:

1. The kind of place

Nature play requires land that is not too protected and is wild; at least in children's eyes. This might be a quiet corner in a local park, a small neighbourhood creek, a beach, a vacant city lot, part of a local school, or your own backyard. However large or small, the site must have natural elements to play with and discover, such as: rocks, dirt, trees, bugs, flowers, mud, and/or water. Ideally the place must enable children to dig, collect, climb, build, or hide there.

2. The kind of play

The goal is play that children themselves initiate, guide, change, or abandon. Ideally, there are no formal objectives and few rules. It is vital that the play actively engages children with nature; it's not just any play that happens outdoors. Putting your Ping-Pong table in the backyard is fun, but not nature play! Nature play is catching bugs, collecting leaves and rocks, hiding in tall grass, digging for buried treasure, splashing in the creek, building a shelter, and climbing a tree.

3. Repetition

It is important that children have regular opportunities to play in nature. This does not mean it needs to be regularly time-tabled in to the week's events, but that children have the chance to play outside often, and revisit locations to build on prior play.

KEEP IT SAFE

Nature play is no more dangerous than many other things children do, like running down stairs, playing football, riding in a car, or jumping on a trampoline! In fact, the most common cause of children's accidental death is car accidents, but you still drive them places. While outdoor play does have risks, it also brings real developmental benefits.

You should always consider safety of course, but do not let manageable risks keep you from nature play. Ultimately, your children must learn to judge risks, gauge their limits, and practice responsibility for themselves.

Here are a few tips to keep your children's nature play safe:

Weather: In very hot weather, children should avoid play in direct sunlight in the middle of the day, wear light and loose clothing, and drink lots of water. In cold weather, they should dress warmly with a good hat and wet-weather-gear, and be sure to promptly change out of any wet clothes.

Sunscreen: A little sunshine is good for us; too much is not. Routinely put sunscreen on children, and have them wear comfy hats with brims.

Insects and other animals: Have your children use insect repellent and wear long sleeves, long pants, and shoes. Tuck pants into socks. Be aware that stagnant water attracts mosquitoes.

Have your children watch for bees coming and going from a particular place, and then avoid that area.

Teach children to be alert for local pests (eg. skip-jack ants on the Surfcoast, wasps in summer, redback spiders between rocks, blue-ringed octopuses in rock-pools) without alarming them. We need them to be realistically cautious, not terrified OR unsafe.

Plants: Teach children to recognise any local plants that might cause irritation. If exposed, wash the area gently with water and soap. Most plant irritations cause nothing worse than an itch. Over-the-counter

lotions usually help, but call your doctor if blisters form. Teach them not to eat any plant part you haven't approved, even if it looks okay (eg. some children are tempted by mushrooms).

Water: Start swimming lessons at a young age. Teach children caution when playing in, on or near water. Teach children to wash their hands if they have had contact with water that might be polluted.

Other wildlife: The danger from wild animals is very small, but teach children to respect wildlife. Snakebites are rare, and rarely fatal. They almost never bite humans unless disturbed.

Stranger danger: All children should be taught to be cautious with any unknown person. However, crimes against children are no more common than a generation ago. Playing outside with friends, either at or very near to home, will remove most of the danger.

Germs: Most germs travel from person to person. The things your child will probably handle while playing outside are less likely to transmit germs than a doorknob at school or a toy at a store!

LEADING THE WAY

As a parent, you are the key to your child's nature play. It is important that you regularly encourage outdoor play and 'nudge' them outside, away from the electronic devices that enthrall so many children.

If they are not used to playing outside, you may quickly hear complaints like, "I'm bored," and "There's nothing to do out here." Don't give in! Children have an incredible talent for making up play, but it may take them awhile to get going. You can set an example; be the first to splash in the puddle, roll down the hill, or climb the tree. They'll soon get the idea — and then you can withdraw and let them play!

As they play outside more often, challenge them to explore and find things they've never noticed before, or things that have changed since last week. When they do, show genuine interest in their discoveries. And don't fret if their play causes minor damage to your plants; it's a small price to pay for good play!

What sort of nature-play experience are you ready for?

Use this scale to guide you in selecting the outdoor experience for your child that you are ready for, and to prompt you to consider moving a little outside your comfort zone.

Outdoor play in a secure environment (eg. backyard, kindergarten or care setting)

- Is your goal simply to spend more time with your child outside in the backyard or a supervised setting such as a playgroup, child-care centre or kindergarten?



Supervised but unstructured play in an outdoor setting with broad boundaries

- Are you not quite ready for bush play, but you are willing to take them to a park or a local play venue such as Balliang sanctuary?



Supervised but unstructured play in a bush setting

- Are you and your child ready to explore a bush setting, but would prefer a little help and guidance?



Free independent play in a bush setting

- Are you looking for some ideas and bush places that your child can explore freely and independently?

Organised Groups



Unrestricted by age:

1. Muddy Boots Sandy Hands

Muddy Boots and Sandy Hands is a Geelong-based initiative with the aim of connecting children and families of the Geelong region with nature and the outdoors. They run informal get togethers at local parks, provide information and offer a Nature Passport for children. Have a look (or, better yet, join) their Facebook page 'Muddy Boots and Sandy Hands'

2. More Family Day Care Educators are now providing bush play experiences. If you are looking for (and eligible) for such a care arrangement contact your local council office for more information.

3. Glastonbury provides information on how to form your own bush group. For more information on this, please turn to page 20 of this resource.

0 - 4 years

Moriac Bush Group

Located in the Moriac Newling Reserve, behind the kindergarten.

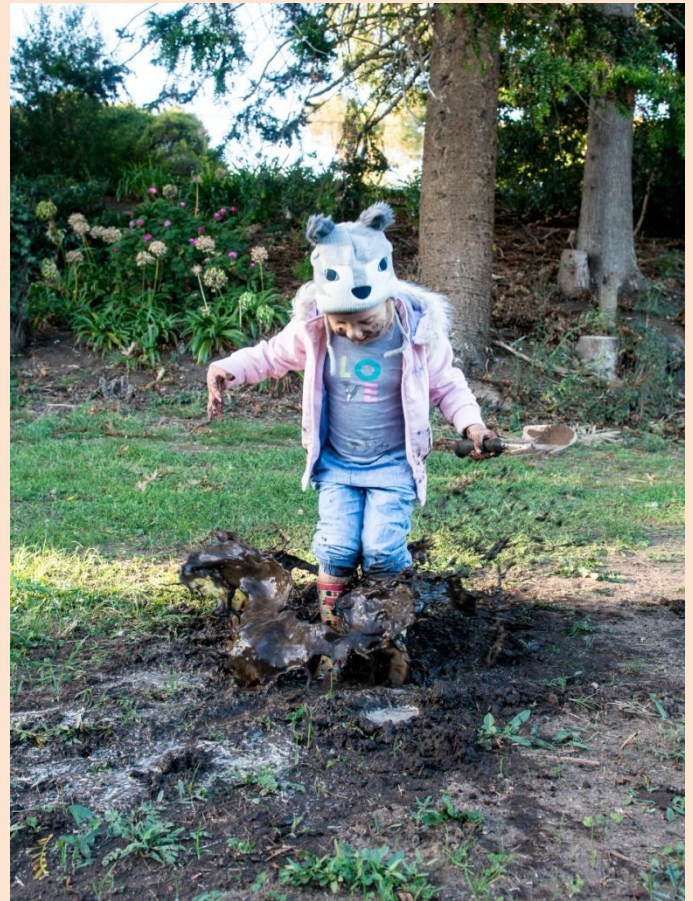
Colac Bush Group

Located in the Colac Hugh Murray Reserve.

For both of these, contact Kim Coulter at Glastonbury on 52226911

Other play groups

We are hearing of more and more playgroups that are offering at least one play session outside. Check with playgroups in your local area to see what is available. Local Maternal and Child Health Nurses may be able to assist you in finding one that suits you.



Preschool-age

Forrest Kids Go Bush

This is a closed group for children preschool to grade 2. If you are considering developing a similar group you are invited to contact the Principal of Forrest Primary School, on 52366393.

Many kindergartens have at least one nature-play session per week, including:

Jan Juc

Anglesea

H. M Kininmonth, Winchelsea

Lorne

Moriac

Torquay

Williams House, Christian College

Ocean Grove – Boorai centre

More and more are emerging each term. Speak with your local kindergarten director



School-age

Geelong Field Naturalists

Young people from the age of 6 years are welcome to attend regular half and full-day activities which will include a mix of bushcraft, nature talks, nature crafts and day or night walks into the bush.

Meeting nights are on the third Wednesday of the month; 6pm to 7.30 pm at the Geelong Botanic Gardens Friends Room. The entrance is at the intersection of Holt Road and Eastern Park Circuit.



Scouts Australia

Scouting is a worldwide movement, and the biggest and most successful youth organisation in Australia. More than 20,000 boys, girls, and adults in Victoria from diverse cultural or religious backgrounds, including those with an intellectual or physical disability, enjoy a diverse range of fun and exciting activities.

Scouts can take part in a variety of outdoor activities, such as camping and bushcraft, through to more extreme challenges such as abseiling, overnight hiking, rafting, canoeing, canyoning, snow activities, rock climbing, and sailing.



Scouts can also get involved in performing arts, leadership development, community service, amateur radio operation, environmental projects, large-scale Australian and international events, and service projects in developing countries. Scouts also learn valuable practical skills such as first aid and cooking, and fun skills, like how to build a ballista and fire wet sponges at their friends!

Scouts learn to take responsibility for themselves and the world around them, and to live with each other through their adventures. Every year, Scouts contribute to their local communities through participating in such activities as Clean Up Australia Day, Harmony Day and planting trees.

Annual and joining fees apply.

For more information please contact Scouts Victoria...

- Phone: 1800 726 887
- Website:
www.vicscouts.com.au
- Or pop in to a group near you just to have a look at what they do and ask some questions



Geelong Botanic Gardens school holiday program

Themed programs highlighting plants and their stories include hands-on activities, discovery trails and learning. Check out the following website prior to the next school holidays:
<http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/gbg/learn/article/item/8d0931ecbc699c1.aspx>



Guides

Together, in a safe environment, girls and their Leaders decide, plan and take part in a range of activities from camping and community action projects to overseas travel. Girls are welcome to join their nearest Girl Guide Unit at any time of year, and we invite girls to participate in a three week trial before joining



Guide set themselves challenges to carry out to the best of their ability. They participate in many activities such as: canoeing, archery, abseiling, camping, skiing, hiking overnight, cooking damper over a fire or just sitting around a campfire singing, chatting and sharing a joke. There are other times when the girls prefer indoor activities such as trying a special recipe, having a go at making something, being creative in the visual or dramatic arts, working as a team to plan their next adventure, finding out about other cultures and religions or learning skills through games. No two meetings are ever the same.

Most Guide Units meet once a week for about two hours.

Annual and joining fees apply.

For more information or a guides group near you please contact Guides Victoria...

Phone: Helen Carruthers 03 5254 1299 or 0434 070 211 or email hcarruthers@guidesvic.org.au

Website: www.guidesvic.org.au

Locations around Geelong for independent nature play

Remember that children often love revisiting favourite places, especially if they have a project 'on the go'. Clearly the list of possible locations is enormous. Here are just a few ideas to begin your journey ...

North	South	Bellarine	Central
Cowie creek	Angahook State park	Barwon Heads Bluff Marine Sanctuary	Balyang sanctuary
Hovells creek reserve	Anglesea River & Beach	Begola Wetlands	Barwon River
Limeburners lagoon	Bellbrae Reserve	Edwards point state fauna reserve	Belmont Common
Moorpanyal Park	Erskine Falls	Foreshore reserves (Pt Lonsdale, Ocean Grove)	Eastern Beach
Osborne Park	Spring Creek Reserve Torquay	Ocean Grove nature reserve	Geelong Botanic Gardens
Rippleside park	Taylor park, Torquay	Queenscliff pier and surrounds	Kardinia Park
Serendip sanctuary	Torquay foreshore	Reedy Lakes Wildlife reserve	Point Henry
The You Yangs	Waurin Ponds to Belmont creek walk	The Bellarine Rail Trail	Tim Hill reserve Highton

For further information, including maps, contact City of Greater Geelong, and Surfcoast Shire, service centres.

For more ideas and locations please have a look at the following websites:

1. Muddy Boots Sandy Hands

<https://www.facebook.com/MuddyBootsAndSandyHands>

2. Healthy Parks, Healthy People:

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/about-us/healthy-parks-healthy-people/find-out-more>

3. City of Greater Geelong Community Directory

<http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/leisure/parks/>

4. Surfcoast Shire

<http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/Home>

5. Glastonbury Community Services

<http://www.glastonbury.org.au>

6. Parks Victoria

<http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/>

7. Play Outside Australia

<https://www.facebook.com/PlayOutsideAustralia>

If you are interested in developing your own bush group

A step-by-step guide is available.

Called the 'Bush Group Resource Guide', it has been produced by Glastonbury Community Services, Barwon Medicare Local, and Active in Parks, Victoria.

This guide includes such helpful components as:

- A facilitator's guide
 - Policy development guidelines
 - Risk assessment and management
- ... and more!

You will find it on the
Glastonbury Community
Services website.



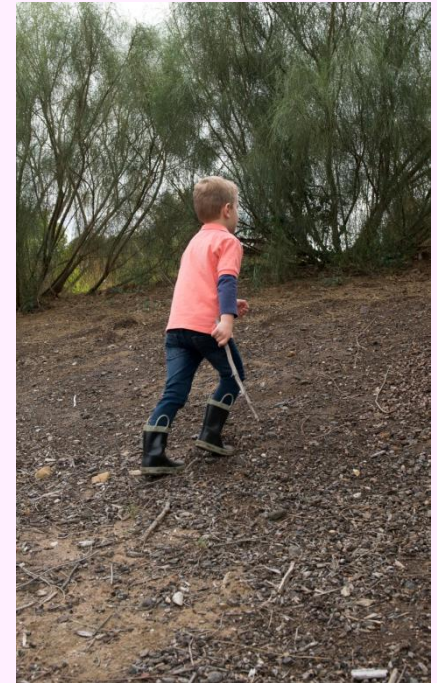
54 ideas to lead your child toward nature play

Your child will quickly develop the skills they need to develop their own games and imaginative play, or just to spend time quietly examining their environment (there are hundreds of things to find under old dead logs for instance). To get them started, however, it might help to suggest an activity. Here are some ideas to get you started. How many can you remember doing as a child?

1. Go for a walk.
2. Ride bikes.
3. Fly kites.
4. Blow bubbles.
5. Learn to do cartwheels.
6. Make a sundial
7. Walk barefoot in the grass.
8. Hunt for 'dinosaur' bones
9. Melt some crayons in the sun
10. Jump in puddles.
11. Paint the fence with a fly swatter.
12. Make a nature collage.
13. Stack and balance rocks.
14. Go on a sound safari.
15. Investigate your yard with a magnifying glass.
16. Play classic outdoor games -- Red Light Green Light, Steal the Bacon, etc.



17. Have a scavenger hunt. Look for things like pine cones, gum nuts, and other common outdoor items.
18. Play "Follow the Leader" through your yard or neighbourhood.
19. Make a hopscotch game using sticks and stones.
20. Drive to a neighbouring town and check out their playgrounds.
21. Set up a canvas and paint the view – just like painters really do!
22. Make bird feeders out of pine cones, peanut butter and bird seed.
23. Garden. Teach your little one to weed or sow seeds.
24. Take a nap in a hammock, on a blanket, or on the grass.
25. Make a mobile using pine cones, sticks, feathers and rocks.
26. Build a fort using lawn furniture or fallen branches.
27. Race the waves in to the shore at the beach.
28. Paint rocks.
29. Pretend to be cave-people.
30. Have a water fight.
31. Climb a tree.
32. Take pictures.
33. Make mud pies.
34. Sing as loud as you can.
35. Play hide and seek with torches.
36. Water the plants.



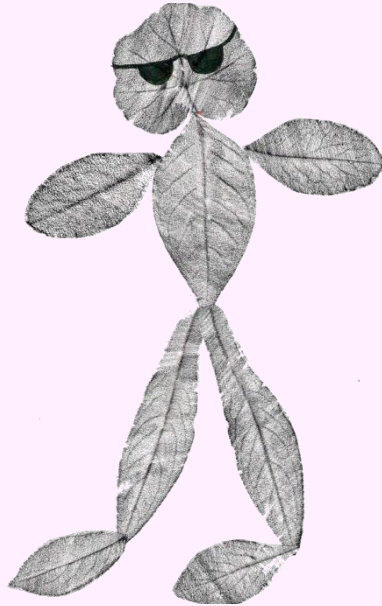
37. Build and obstacle course
38. Search for bugs.
39. Run through the sprinkler.
40. Have a tug of war
41. Play on the swings in the dark.
42. Pick flowers
43. Make a daisy chain
44. Skip stones on water
45. Find shapes in the clouds.
46. Go fishing.
47. Try bird-watching
48. Identify stars in the night sky
49. Find a shady tree to read under.
50. Roll down a big grassy slope.
51. Explore rock pools to find shells, crabs and other sea creatures (*leave them untouched*).
52. Pitch a tent and camp outside.
53. Find, sort and make a leaf scrapbook, or try making leaf rubbings.
54. Find and follow some animal tracks or try to identify them by their pool!



Make a leaf rubbing



Turn it into a person



Try bird-watching



Follow a butterfly



Make a pine cone bird-feeder

Treasure Hunt



Pine Needles



Smooth Rock



Nut



Green Leaf



Yellow Leaf



Red Leaf



Pine Cone



Flower



Insect



Feather

Treasure Hunt

You can do a treasure hunt by yourself, or you can invite friends over. Maybe you can photograph your finds?

Be sure not to disturb plants or animals.

Be Creative

On the next page you will find some ideas of things you can make using what you have found in nature ... just add glue and string!

Make a 'bark'ing owl



Make your own paint brushes



Make some fairy folk



Make mobiles



Would you like to do some further reading?

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder. Richard Louv's 2005 book documents decreased exposure of children to nature and how this harms them and impacts across society. The book examines research and concludes that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults. The author suggests solutions to the problems he describes. A revised and expanded edition was published in 2008.

Thunder Tree: Lessons from an Urban Wildland by Robert Michael Pyle. This engrossing memoir is an eloquent portrait of place, revealing the relationship between people, especially children, and the natural world. This environmental coming-of-age story offers a powerful argument for preserving opportunities to explore nature.

A Natural Sense of Wonder: Connecting Kids with Nature Through the Seasons by Rick Van Noy. Van Noy, chronicles his efforts to turn his children's attention from their television and computer screens to the outdoors. In a series of essays organized mostly by season, he describes a host of outdoor adventures including swimming, hiking, gardening, and fishing with his family.

The Stick Book: Loads of Things You Can Make or Do with a Stick by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield. The stick is a universal toy; totally natural, all-purpose, free, it offers limitless opportunities for outdoor play and adventure. A stick provides a starting point for an active imagination and the raw material for transformation into almost anything! In this book, Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield offer dozens of suggestions for things to do with a stick to inspire creative and imaginative play, games, woodcraft, conservation, music and more.

Wild Play: Parenting adventures in the great outdoors by David Sobel. A trailblazing environmental educator raised his children in the heart of nature.

Moving the Classroom Outdoors: Schoolyard-Enhanced Learning in Action by Herbert W. Broda. Since Broda published his groundbreaking first book on outdoor learning, many schools have embraced the benefits of "greening" their learning programs. Herb now showcases examples of schoolyard-enhanced learning in action, complete with photos of a wide variety of outdoor learning environments

The Kids' Outdoor Adventure Book by Stacy Tornio and Ken Keffer. Offers a fun, hands-on approach to getting involved in nature, The Kids' Outdoor Adventure Book includes 448 things to do year-round for children of all ages: more than 1 activity for every day of the year.

Nature's Playground by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield; 2005. Activities, Crafts, and Games to Encourage Children to Get Outdoors,

Or begin a web-based journey...

- Nature Play Week (Vic)
- Nature Play W.A.
- Kids in Nature Network
- The Imagination tree: 60 nature play ideas
- Children and Nature Network
- Project Wild Thing
- Walkingmaps.com.au

Finally, have a look at **Andy Goldsworthy's land art**. Share it with your children to inspire them!

Nature-based books for children:

(Many of these are available now at libraries throughout Geelong)

Bridie's Boots by Phil Cummings & Sara Acton: When Bridie receives a pair of gumboots for her fifth birthday she is delighted. They are the best boots ever! Just right for splashing in puddles and twirling on tiptoes. But when she turns six Bridie decides her boots should go on a big adventure.

Hello from Nowhere by Raewyn Caisley & Karen Blair: Eve lives in a roadhouse in the middle of the Nullarbor and when her Nan visits, Eve shows her all the things that are special about where she lives. A celebration of the Australian outback and the special connection between grandparent and grandchild.

Alfie in the Garden by Debi Gliori: Alfie Rabbit is helping his mummy in the garden. His world turns from real to imagined, as a gatefold spread is opened. Now he's in the jungle! He's a lion on the prowl, an elephant spraying water from his trunk, and a little bird flying home to his nest! A book for toddlers, celebrating their imagination.

The Wild One by Sonya Hartnett: Charlie met the wild one when he was very young. They spent hours playing together outdoors, and when Charlie returned to school, he was reluctant. School wasn't about tadpoles wriggling or splashing in puddles or throwing leaves into the wind. Charlie grows and becomes a doctor. Life becomes busy. When he has his own child, he loses sight of the wild one. The only things he can see are the things his friend once loved. This is a story about friendship and the cycle of life, and speaks of the risk of disconnection with nature as we age.

***Rain Reign* MP3 CD – Audiobook**, by Ann M. Martin: Rose has OCD, Asperger's syndrome, and an obsession with homonyms. She gave her dog Rain a name with two homonyms (Reign, Rein). When a storm hits town, Rain goes missing. Now Rose has to find her dog, even if it means leaving her routines and safe places to search. Rose will find Rain, but so will Rain's original owners.

Winnie the Pooh: Roo's Big Nature Day, by K. Emily Hutta. Roo is bored inside and making a pain of himself. His mother Kanga suggests he go outside and explore. Roo learns that outside is a fun place to be.

The Giving Tree, by Shel Silverstein. A young boy and tree are friends for life. This book is a great introduction to the idea that trees provide all sorts of benefits.

The Lorax, by Dr. Seuss. Teaches the need to be mindful how we use our natural resources, and to do so for the long haul. This book provides an opportunity to practice your funny cartoon voices.

We're Going on a Leaf Hunt, by Steve Metzger. Three friends hike over a mountain and through a forest to collect leaves of all kinds and colours. With easy rhyming text and fun sound effects, children will delight in this rollicking autumn story.

Flotsam, by David Wiesner. A science-minded boy goes to the beach to collect and examine flotsam - anything floating that has been washed ashore. Bottles, lost toys, small objects of every description are among his finds. One discovery: a barnacle-encrusted underwater camera, has its own secrets to share.

Birds, Reader's Digest Association. Don't be afraid to share field guides and other more advanced wildlife books. Often the renderings of wildlife in nature guides are colourful and visually engaging.

National Geographic Magazines. Inspirational and a great conversation starter!

Voices in the Park, by Anthony Browne. Four people enter a park, and through their eyes we see four different visions. As the story moves from one voice to another, their perspectives are reflected in the shifting landscape and seasons.

The Listening Walk, by Paul Showers. We're going on a listening walk. *Shhhhhh*. Do not talk. Do not hurry. Get ready to fill your ears with a world of wonderful and surprising sounds.

In the Small, Small Pond by Denise Fleming. Describes the actions of various pond animals. Children will enjoy searching for the frog on each page.

Everyone Poops by Taro Gomi. *Everyone Poops* is a huge hit with children of all ages, but is particularly well-timed for those experimenting with using the potty. In addition, *Everyone Poops* helped turn children into super scat sleuths as they adventure in nature.

What Do You Do With a Tail Like This? by Steve Jenkins. This beautiful book combines Jenkins' collages with fascinating information about the various ways animals use their body parts. For example: elephants give themselves baths with their noses; crickets have ears in their knees, and some fish have four eyes.

The Seaside Switch, by Kathleen Kudlinski. This innovative picture book artfully investigates how the tides affect different sea and sand creatures. It illustrates the cycle of taking turns, and is a celebration of senses, as sight, sound, scent, touch, and taste are all engaged. The sun's and moon's role in the tides is subtly touched upon, without heavy scientific explanations.

Stella, Star of the Sea, by Marie-Louise Gay. Stella and her little brother are spending the day at the sea. Stella has been to the sea before and knows its secrets, but Sam has many questions. Stella has an answer for them all. The only thing she isn't sure of is whether Sam will ever come into the water. Gently humorous, the book also captures the relationship between an older sister and her baby brother.



Thank you.

**We wish you and your child
fun, health and adventure.**