

yarram

early learning



Ngarawert



Wook Gook



Bataluk



Tiddalek



Narr

Tiddalek Nature Program Handbook 2021

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Program Overview

At Yarram Early Learning, we believe childhood is precious and that being outside in nature plays an important part of this time.

Contact with nature and the outdoors can at times, be limited for some children. Research suggests that children need to spend more time outside, in nature.

Yarram Early Learning (YEL) and, the Tiddalek (Kindergarten) room intend to use our 'Nature Program' to support young children through play, to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It will encourage the children to take risks, self-assess their risks, ensuring that the children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others. In doing this, the children will learn to take on challenges and accept responsibility.

Acknowledgement of Country

Yarram Early Learning would like to acknowledge the Gurnaikurnai people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather, learn and play and pay our respects to their Elders, both past, present, and future.

Children learn from nature. Our Nature Program will provide your children with the time and the ideal environment for them to learn, with uninterrupted nature play in different areas of Yarram and District, where they are able to use what nature has provided as materials for learning. The Nature Program will be a special part of your child's total Kindergarten experience.

The children, along with the educators, will have the opportunity to play in the rain, roll down grassy mounds, balance on fallen logs, be involved in dramatic play, find insects, and draw with sticks in the ground – to just name a few of the activities. Each child's developmental progression, skills and interests will be noted by their educators. The educators will use this knowledge to support the children's learning in nature, just as we do in all areas at the Centre. The educators will support the children as they take risks and face challenges essential to well-rounded learning.

Stories will be told, knowledge will be shared, and songs will be sung. At times, we may have visitors from our local community who may assist with the children's learning. We are fortunate to have access to a vast range of people who have an understanding and connection to our land. This will encourage the children to connect with and respect our areas. They will connect with their land in a way that cannot be done under a roof or within the walls of our Kindergarten room.

We invite you to come on this journey with us and see the wonder of the natural world around us.

Session information

The Nature Program will take place each Wednesday and Thursday for a period of 3-4 hours. The time that we are away from the Centre will be guided by the children and their needs and interests within the session. Three or Four sessions throughout 2021 will require us to take a bus for a day trip to a special place of interest. Our regular weekly sessions, will take place at either the Yarram Memorial Park, Yarram Wetlands and Rail Trail, Yarram Community Botanical Gardens, the Tarra River Rest Area or the Commercial Road Central Business District. Prior to the commencement of each session, the educators will scan the learning spaces to ensure they are safe and to identify areas of potential interest.

Each session will begin with a gathering time. A story will be read and a group discussion will take place. The natural boundary markers of the program site will be pointed out and discussed as required, with the children. The children will then be free to engage in play within the boundaries of the Nature Program site. Again, the children will come together with the teachers and educators to sit together, chat and have something to eat and drink. The children will then be free to re-engage in play, until such time as we meet again to chat and eat or the session concludes.

Session cancellations will only happen in extreme circumstances which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Staff absences
- Health alerts
- Covid-19 restrictions
- Extreme weather
- Community emergency

A communication notice will be placed on Xplor should a cancellation or change to the schedule take place.

COMMUNICATION

We ask that parents/guardians are always contactable throughout the duration of our Nature Program. If this isn't possible, please ensure that the teachers/educators are aware and an alternative emergency contact has been noted.

Please note: if you need to get in contact with the Kindergarten staff whilst Nature Program is in progress, please contact the Yarram Early Learning office and a staff member will pass on any information or notes to them.

STAFF

There will be a minimum of ONE qualified Kindergarten teacher and TWO educators in attendance at each session. The teachers and educators in attendance will be our regular Kindergarten staff and at times, other YEL staff. All Kindergarten staff have been trained in the area of Nature Kindergartens and have spent time at Professional Development sessions to educate themselves in this area. Tracey, one of our Kindergarten teachers, has also developed and implemented Nature Programs at other Kindergartens where she has previously been employed.

VOLUNTEERS

We welcome any parents/guardians who may want to join us for our Nature Program. Volunteers may be required, if the educators determine that additional adult supervision is needed to ensure the safe running of the program. Volunteers will remain under the direct supervision of the accompanying teacher at all times throughout the program. All volunteers must hold a Working with Children's Check. More information on these checks can be found at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au or via the YEL office.

WEATHER

Weather information will be posted on Xplor the afternoon prior to each session. This will assist parents/guardians dressing their child appropriately.



What will your child need?

LUNCHBOX

Parents/guardians are required to provide a healthy lunchbox each day for their child. We ask that you consider the environment by reducing the amount of packaging by using 'nude food' containers. We also ask that your child's lunchbox contains an icepack, which will ensure that their food stays cold and fresh. We will be unable to heat any food, so please ensure that the food that is packed doesn't require reheating.

WATER

Parents/guardians are required to provide their child with a water bottle of fresh water each day. There will be access to fresh drinking water to supplement this when required throughout the program.

CLOTHING

We ask that parents/guardians determine appropriate clothing based on the weather forecast appropriate for each session. It is important that the children wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear which:

- Allows the children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, running.
- Keeps the children warm and dry in cold and wet weather.
- Protects the children from the damaging effects of the sun, UV rays in warm weather and high UV conditions.
- Reduces the risk of sunburn, bites, scratches, and stings.

- In the case of footwear, keeps the children's feet and toes covered, has flexible soles, is waterproof and sufficiently sturdy to allow the children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces.

Whilst we understand that gumboots are an easy option, they do not provide a safe grip for climbing and are not as sturdy for the children's feet. We suggest a boot – like the one pictured below as our preferred option. Whilst this is the type of footwear we suggest, a child will not be excluded if they do not have the recommended footwear.



SUNSMART

Yarram Early Learning Centre is an accredited SunSmart Centre. The SunSmart policy has been adopted by the YELC to ensure that your child is protected from skin damage caused by the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. The policy will be implemented throughout the year during all outdoor activities (*refer to the Sun Protection Policy*).

A legionnaire or broad brimmed hat is required during the warmer months of our Nature Program (Terms 1&4). Beanies are acceptable and encouraged to be worn over the winter months (Terms 2&3). Teachers and educators will be expected to role model these SunSmart practices (*refer to the Sun Protection Policy*).

WATERPROOF CLOTHING

Light, rainproof pants and a jacket to be worn over suitable clothing will be supplied by Yarram Early Learning. These will be the responsibility of the staff, who will wash them and bring them to each session when required.

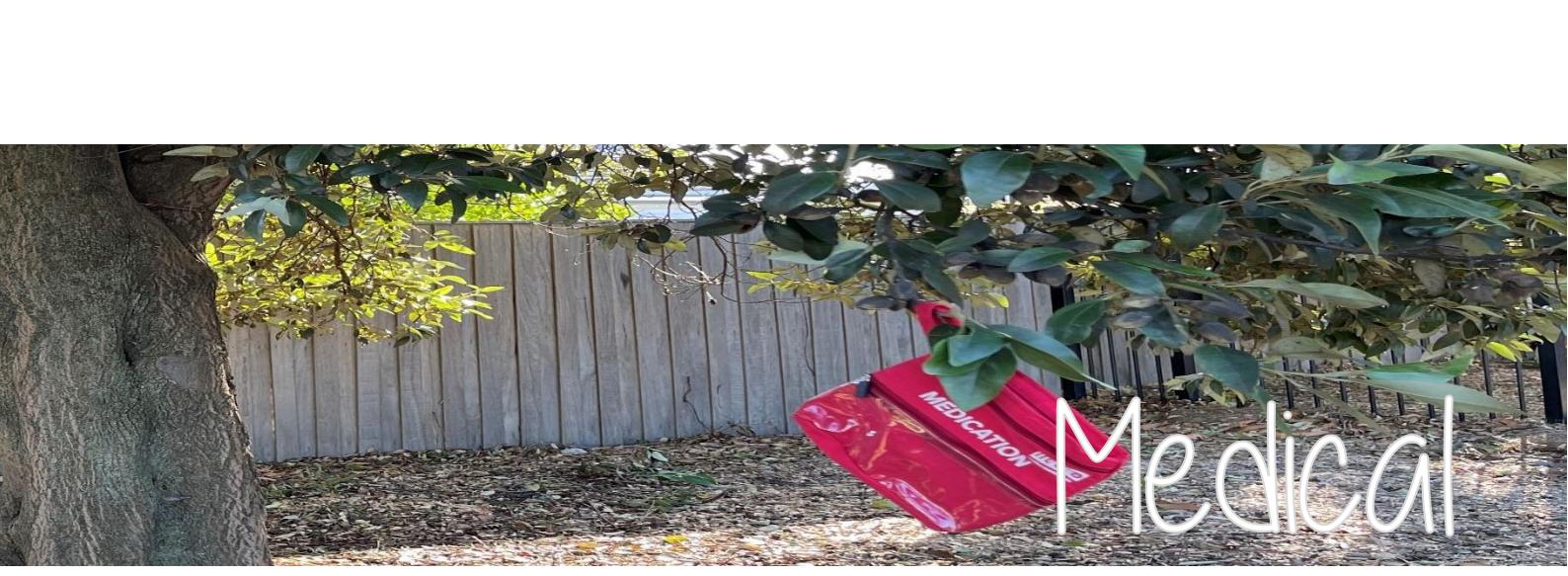


ARRIVAL

Drop off for the Nature Program is at YEL. We ask that where possible, all children attending on Wednesdays and Thursdays are at the Centre by no later than 9.00am. This will ensure that we are able to have the children ready to depart the Centre by 9.45am. If for any reason your child is going to be late, please ring the Centre so the teachers/educators are aware.

DEPARTURE

Pick up of children will be at YEL. If you require your child to be collected earlier and we are still away from the Centre, please let the staff in the office or the Kindergarten teachers/educators know at your earliest convenience. The Director or Responsible Person in Charge will advise of the safest and most convenient place for pick up to take place.



Medical

MEDICATION

All medication and a copy of the children's Action Plans will be carried with the teachers/educators at all times.

Other medications required, may be signed in on arrival at YEL as per normal procedures and in accordance with the YEL Medication Policy.



Other information

TOILETS

To maintain the required teacher/educator to children ratios at all times, a camping toilet will be provided for the children and teachers/educators to use when required and it will be housed in an appropriate camping tent. If the group is close to YEL, a additional staff member will come to collect any child/ren who may need to use the toilet and return them to the Centre and then take them back to the group.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Extensive risk evaluations have been carried out by the teachers/educators for all Nature Program sites. These are available for any parents/guardians to view at any time.

EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

There are times that have been identified that may require our Nature Program participants to evacuate to a safer location to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the entire group. In this event, the teachers/educators will notify parents/guardians via an Administration

message on Xplor.

The reasons for relocating to a safe area include, but are not limited to: fire/bushfire, missing child, aggressive dog off lead, other animal intruder, uninvited person/stranger (threatening, causing a nuisance or unease for the teachers, educators and children), natural events such as extreme weather, medical emergency or an accident.



Policy Summaries

FURTHER POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Nature Program is conducted as part of the Yarram Early Learning Kindergarten program and is therefore governed by the regulations and procedures of the Kindergarten and Early Learning Centre. Due to the locations of the Nature Program and various environmental factors, variations and additions to our Centre policies have been identified and different procedures created. These are specific to our Nature Program to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, teachers, educators and volunteers involved. We ask that parents/guardians view the policies regarding the Nature Program, available on the Centre website, to gain a full understanding of the responsibilities of the Yarram Early Learning Committee of Management, staff, volunteers and parents/guardians.

NATURE PROGRAM POLICIES:

- YEL Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- YEL Sun Protection Policy
- Nature Program Dog Awareness Policy
- Nature Program Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Nature Program Extreme Weather Policy
- Nature Program Identification and Visibility Policy
- Nature Program Protective Clothing Policy
- Nature Program Snake Awareness Policy