

“Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young; it travels along grass stained sleeves to the heart. If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment, we must also save an endangered indicator species: the child in nature.”

—Richard Louv

For the last three years Little Learners Early Development & Education Centre has been selected as a finalist for the categories of **Early Childhood Service of the Year**.

In 2016 & 2018 we were also selected as finalists for the **Early Childhood Director of the Year** in Australia’s biggest early childhood care and education awards known as the Australian Early Education & Care Awards.

In May 2018, Ken Scott-Hamilton was chosen as the WA Early Childhood Director of the Year.

Under the Directorship of Ken Scott-Hamilton, Little Learners EDEC launched Australia’s first full-time, onsite Nature Kindergarten in October 2017.

Many older adults in Australia have memories of being free to roam, to explore the creeks, the beach and the bush. Such memories, together with the well-researched negative consequences to children of not having contact with nature, have led to a growing movement among concerned educators, academics and parents to address this imbalance.

Our Philosophy:

Our Nature Kindergarten program focuses on the **Reggio Emilia inspired approach** to early learning, which has become the benchmark for excellence in guiding young children.

At the core of our program is a Child-First ‘emergent curriculum’. An emergent Curriculum can be defined as a

way of supporting learning that is based on the children’s interests. Learning occurs naturally and children thrive and learn best when their interests are considered and captured.

We believe that a truly emergent curriculum happens when children who wander, wonder and play are also learning. It happens when children’s interests and passions are respected and nurtured and when educators shift their agenda away from imparting knowledge that we consider worthy, to showing children that we value their curiosity, problem solving, questions, and theories. It happens when we ask open ended questions instead of downloading information.

The Educators act as mentors for the children as they guide them through the adventure of learning outdoors in academic subjects such as arts, music, writing and reading, natural science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

The significant importance of learning through play while outdoors in a natural environment cannot be underestimated.

Our Program:

Our Nature Kindergarten program offers a range of inclusive, engaging, interactive and fun learning experiences that develop self-esteem, resilience, reflection, imagination, resilience, curiosity and the motivation to become a lifelong learner.

This is done while promoting the principles of global sustainability, recognising the uniqueness of the individual & the value of our rich multicultural heritage & diversity.

The children predominately spend their time outdoors all year round. They are brought inside during extreme weather conditions.



Finalist, Early Childhood Service of the Year, 2018, 2017 & 2016.
WA State **Winner**, Early Childhood Director of the Year 2018
AND Finalist, Early Childhood Director of the Year, 2016

The children are not forced to stay outdoors, at ALL times they have a voice and a choice.

While outside, the children have the opportunity to initiate their own learning experiences and activities, through play based learning with appropriate materials for them to use as they wish.

The outdoor emergent curriculum evolves and changes with the children's changing needs and interests allowing them to experience nature in as many ways as possible.

Our Nature Kindergarten program also incorporates many important life skills for the children while they learn through play such as crossing a running river creek bed, walking along logs, climbing trees & jumping off stumps, whittling, interacting with fire, using hand tools and so much more.

The children are able to do their own risk/benefit analysis before deciding to do anything outdoors. This is an incredibly important life skill that they need to be allowed to learn and implement themselves.

Just as importantly the children are able to explore, experience, learn and engage at their own pace and set their own rhythm. They are not constantly interrupted during this process as can happen at other routine centric Childcare Centres and Kindergartens.

All of this occurs under the guidance of our highly skilled and trained professionals. Our Educators apply their professional judgement, common sense, training and instincts in regard to monitoring the children across all weather conditions and any activities that they engage in. At all times, the Educators ensure that the children's safety, health and well-being (both emotional and physical) are paramount.



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