

CASE STUDY 9

Exceptional Educational Outcomes For Children through Nature Play

Kindergarten: Calvary Christian College
Contact: Tracey Schmidt
Location: Logan
Age of Children: 3 to 5 years
Number of Children Involved: 36
Nature Play QLD Involvement: Forest Learning Workshop, Nature Play Spaces consultation, Importance of Nature Play Talk and Nature Play Passports



Calvary Christian College Kindergarten – affectionately known as the Noah Centre – engaged in the centre’s first ever ‘Bush Kindy’ this year, which educator Tracey Schmidt says was “inspired by speakers from Nature Play QLD”.

Tracey attended the Outback Tour at Easter this year, where she listened to Nature Play QLD Program Manager Hyahno Moser’s talk on the importance of nature play, and took part in the Introduction to Forest Learning workshop with Nature Play QLD Community Engagement and Resource Coordinator Anya Perkins.

Inspired to replicate these ideas, the staff began researching the concept and dreamed of a way to make Bush Kindy a reality for the children at their kindergarten.

They surveyed parents to gauge their interest, and Tracey says, “The feedback was an overwhelming ‘Yes, let’s do it!’”.

Anya maintained contact with Tracey after the tour, and assisted Calvary Christian College Kindergarten with their plans to create a bush kindy.

Anya provided the kindergarten with helpful resources, activity ideas and performed a site visit prior to the Bush Kindy week to consult on risk and other factors.

“Anya Perkins from Nature Play QLD was a great encouragement to us throughout the process,” says Tracey.

What The Kids Thought

Tracey says, “The children loved making campfires and cubbies together, and then engaged in imaginative play around these structures. After a few days, the children’s imaginations went wild and we witnessed play that we hadn’t expected as children made different friends and dreamed up new play scenarios. Children overcame physical challenges and gained great satisfaction at their successes with new experiences.”

What The Parents Thought

Tracey says, “Communication from the parents over the weeks after Bush Kindy was extremely positive and they fully supported our values and goals for the program.”

One mum, Jodie Jackson, was grateful not only for the opportunity to let her child play uninhibited in nature, but also for Nature Play QLD’s role in helping make this happen.

“I am extremely grateful as a busy working parent that our school implemented the ‘Bush Kindy’ program in cooperation with Nature Play QLD, and I highly recommend other schools or kindergartens become involved. The supporting material Nature Play QLD provided to parents was excellent. This experience has encouraged me to provide more opportunities for my daughter to play, interact, and most importantly learn in an outdoor environment,” says Jodie.



What The Teachers Thought

“Watching the children connect with the environment, each other and with parents and grandparents who joined us was a beautiful experience for staff,” says Tracey, who is now working on plans to embed a permanent bush kindy in the future.

“Bush Kindy was a huge success and something we will look forward to in the years to come, as it becomes a regular part of our program,” says Tracey.

