



Unstructured Outdoor Play in Outside School Hours Care

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Physical Environment



Beginning of Purposefully promoting Unstructured Play

- ▶ Defining moment – ‘more than half our children between the ages of 5 – 12, spend less time outside than maximum security prisoners. (Griffin Longley – NaturePlay WA)
- ▶ Conversations with various stakeholders including children, staff and families
- ▶ Needing to justify unstructured program
- ▶ Overriding demand for homework
- ▶ Influencing people:
 - ▶ Kylie Brannelly QCAN
 - ▶ Robyn Munro Miller (Article 31) Network NSW
 - ▶ Tim Gill
 - ▶ Richard Louv
 - ▶ Play Wales – Playworkers
 - ▶ Multiple play theorists

What does Play look like in OSHC?

- ▶ Complements NOT duplicates a child's school day
- ▶ Just for the fun of it!
- ▶ "Play is a child's work." Maria Montessori
- ▶ Gives children freedom to choose
- ▶ Extended play opportunities that encourage being in the moment (Mindfulness/time for inquiry)
- ▶ Activity based not always friendship based – builds new relationships
- ▶ Age old tradition
- ▶ 'Importantly, play and leisure assists us to increase our social, emotional, physical and creative development as we communicate and share with others who we are.' NCAC

Roadblocks

- ▶ School staff
 - Not their everyday practice – duties
 - One environment – 2 sets rules
- ▶ Parents
 - Helicopter / Lawnmower / Gardener / Carpenter
 - Remembering their own childhood
- ▶ OSHC staff
 - Duty of Care
 - Risk management
 - Understanding of why?
 - Saying 'NO'

How we encouraged unstructured play?

- ▶ Introduced Nature Play passport
- ▶ Introduced Nature Play 'Licence to Play'
- ▶ Free range kids
- ▶ Learned to actively supervise without intruding or interrupting play
- ▶ Unstructured NOT unsupervised
- ▶ Stopped saying 'no'
- ▶ Allowed children to be bored
- ▶ Utilized school newsletter and message board to introduce our rationale
- ▶ Talked, talked, talked



Opportunities

- ▶ Building relationships
- ▶ Common language
- ▶ Best interest of children
- ▶ Building community culture
- ▶ Links with like minded organisations / people
- ▶ Attracting staff and families with similar visions
- ▶ Being brave – step outside comfort zone



Benefits / Outcomes

- ▶ Improved behaviour
- ▶ Self awareness
- ▶ Breeding independence
- ▶ Changing family/service/community culture
- ▶ Problem solvers
- ▶ No 'I'm bored'