OOSH in the Bush.

Out of Hours School Care and an urban parkland in partnership for the better well-being of children.

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A pilot program about incorporating **nature play** into the Out of Hours School Care learning framework

**What is nature play?**

- Unstructured, experiential, child centered play in the outdoors
- Usually in a natural setting such as the Bush, Beach, playground or park
- Supported by adult mentors to ensure maximum benefit, including managed risk taking and instilling a sense of awe and wonder for the natural world
OOSH in the Bush by numbers

• Funded by the NSW Environmental Trust
• 260 children each engaged in 10 hours of nature play either afterschool or in school holidays
• 60 OOSH educators involved in training, either face to face or via webinars
• 2 key partnerships, Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust and Network of Community activities
• Additional partnerships enacted with 10 individual OOSH Centres
• Visiting OOSH centres were chosen to ensure there was a range of children participating with diverse needs, including special education needs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, Refugee and Asylum Seekers, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, English as a Second language
• 2 outdoor learning sites, Centennial Park, Eastern Suburbs Sydney, Australian Botanic Garden, Western Sydney.
Why nature play?
Benefits of nature play

Supported by International and Australian research, nature play has been proven to:

• Develop creative independent, resilient, children
• Benefits an individual child’s well being
• Develop a foundation for sustainable (environmental) citizenship
• Provides exposure to risk, risk benefit and providing opportunities for children to make informed decisions
• A tool for developing empathy and care for each other and the natural world
• Develop gross and fine motor skills
What did the children do?
Supporting OOSH staff

- Face to face training on site at the Centennial Park and Australian Botanic Garden (40 staff)
- Series of webinars organised through Network including Safety off site, Introduction to Nature Play and my Time, Our Place
- Two additional workshops on themed nature play including climbing and playing with sticks
- Creation of Children in Nature NSW providing ongoing support through a new alliance and website
Moving forward

- State chapters promoting nature play (Nature Play WA, Nature Play SA, Kids in Nature (Vic)
- Visit nature play spaces in WA, SA and Victoria
- Visit a local, State or National Park
- Professional development training delivered by Centennial Parklands Education team
- Nature Play excursions to Centennial Park
- Investigate the international movement of nature play
Thank you