

Natureweavers Earth School – Earth Kids 2020

Natureweavers is a forest school program for children and families. Pioneers in nature pedagogy, we have been playing and learning in, with and from nature since 2010, and we were the first 100% outdoor school program for children in Queensland.

Our weekly Earth School program is a national award-winner and our mentors are some of the most highly qualified, professionally diverse, earth-connected nature pedagogues in Australia.



Natureweavers Earth Kids is our weekly program for children aged 3-12 years.

Earth Kids are either:

Fledglings (new to Natureweavers, attend once a week); or

Elders (been attending Natureweavers for some time, attend 2 times per week).

Fledglings acquire earth-based skills, attitudes and knowledge over time through dedicated instruction and skilled mentoring to become Elders. *Elders* develop these skills, attitudes and knowledge further through project-based pursuits, community connections individual interests.

We gather on our specifically selected property in the Noosa hinterland - a balance of deep forest with Grandmother Tree presiding; a working permaculture farm growing food, firewood and fibre; and a peaceful, shady dam housing turtle and tadpole; all bordered by national park with resident koalas and the Six Mile Creek rising and falling seasonally throughout. This property is an ideal base from which children can play and learn in wildspace with all the elements on offer – water, wind, fire and earth.

Consistent access to wildspace allows children to come to know their local land deeply, developing connections, experiential understanding and bush skills as well as experiencing the simple freedom of unstructured, extended periods of time playing in nature. Over time, children learn when the wild raspberries fruit, how to harvest hibiscus for rope, and where to find the best tinder for their fire. They know what an 'Autumn Wish', a 'Winter Spiral', a 'Spring Blessing' and a 'Summer Sun Bloom' is, and they are tuned in to – and comforted by - the rhythmic passing of time throughout the year. Natureweavers children know how to harvest and whittle a tent peg, how to start a fire from scratch, how to dye fabric with plants, how to grow food from seed, how to navigate without a compass, how to speak bird

language, how to get the carbon nitrogen ratio right in compost, how to wade in wild water, how to recognize animal tracks and how to care for wildlife – animal and plant.

Natureweavers children learn in, with and from nature. Our programs are interest-led, place-based, experiential and seasonal. A rhythm guides the structure of the day, but the content is led by the children and enabled and extended by the mentors. We combine consistent, deep immersion in wildspace and a consultative, honouring way of working with children that creates a real and permanent link between children and earth and thus fosters the next generation of earth warriors. For this is Natureweavers primary aim: to ensure the next generation of children are connected to and protective of their earth, thus ensuring the sustainability of our planet.

Time and space are fundamental. We move in 'nature time', allowing time and space for the children to fully immerse themselves in these experiences, supporting them with knowledge, with respect and with love. Space from parents is crucial to our work – children play very differently when their parents are around. It is our experience – borne over the past 10 years - that children are less likely to engage in risky play, less likely to self-select their play, and less likely to be empowered through achieving challenges on their own, when their parents are present. Natureweavers Earth Kids is thus a child-only program. We support children who are not quite ready to be away from their parents (and parents not quite ready to be away from their children!) in empathetic, compassionate and gentle ways, always in service of the child.

Risk taking is encouraged, as we believe it actively develops children's awareness of risk and their confidence in managing it. Natureweavers children use real tools, light fires, climb high into trees and play freely in puddles, creeks and dams. Seasonal and dynamic risks are discussed with the children and managed as a group. Natureweavers mentors model calmness and connection, resilience and persistence, as well as creativity and wonder – we invite children to recognize and nourish these qualities in themselves as well.

Multi-aged play is the norm. Children range in age from 3-16 years old. It is our experience that multi-age play is less competitive, more creative, and more conducive to practicing new skills, and it is a practice we pro-actively engage in at Natureweavers. Children attend Natureweavers as their kinder program, their homeschooling/unschooling program, in addition to their regular school week, and/or as a topic of interest arises for them (e.g firemaking in Winter).



Program Details –

Earth Kids Elders

2020 Term Dates

Term 1:	Wednesday 5 February – Friday 3 April
Term 2:	Wednesday 22 April – Friday 26 June
Term 3:	Wednesday 15 July – Friday 18 September
Term 4:	Wednesday 7 October – Friday 11 December
When:	Wednesday Thursday or Friday (enrolment for at least 2 days)
Where:	45 Bougainvillea Drive, Black Mountain
Who:	Children aged 4-16
Time:	9.00am - 2.00pm
Cost:	\$70 per session

Earth Kids Fledglings

2020 Term Dates

Term 1:	Tuesday 11 February – Tuesday 31 March
Term 2:	Tuesday 21 April – Tuesday 23 June
Term 3:	Tuesday 14 July – Tuesday 15 September
Term 4:	Tuesday 6 October – Tuesday 8 December
When:	Tuesdays only
Where:	45 Bougainvillea Drive, Black Mountain
Who:	Children aged 3-16
Time:	9.00am - 12.00pm
Cost:	\$50 per session

Daily program cost includes:

- Small group numbers to manage risk:benefit of the program
- Qualified forest educator mentoring
- All equipment, tools and resources
- Eco-arts immersion
- Wild foods and herbal first aid
- Yoga, natural movement and relaxation instruction
- Qualified permaculture instruction
- Filtered tank drinking and washing water
- Environmentally sustainable home and practices
- Priority placing and discounts in holiday programs
- 3 seasonal celebrations (Autumn, Winter, Spring)

Enrolments are accepted throughout the year – come for a term, a season, a whole year, and beyond. If you have any questions about any of this information, and/or would like to enrol your child, please contact Carly on 0403133679 or carly@natureweavers.com.au.