

Natureweavers Earth Kids – Elders

Elders are children who have attended Natureweavers for some time, or who have attended previously. Elders are able to apply their earth-based skills, knowledge and attitudes towards projects, both individual and in community, which deepens their knowledge, refines their skills and nourishes their relationship with earth. Over time, Elders complete various modules of the **Permaculture Design Certificate** (sustainable gardening and life skills), become members of the **Whittlers Guild** (knives, saws and wood), the **WheelKeepers** (Phenology Wheels and sacred ecology) and the **Wild Apprentices** (foraging and herbal medicine).

Elders Policies and Practices



Play and Learning in Wildspaces

Natureweavers supports children's outdoor play in all weather. A condition of attending Natureweavers is that your child is dressed and equipped for a day in wildspace. We spend all day outside and in the bush - walking, scrambling, climbing, foraging, building and we may well be poked, scratched, bitten, sunkissed, slimy and muddy. Inappropriate clothing and gear can really impact on the children - on their safety, comfort and their ability to engage in the program. Please bear this in mind when you are preparing for their time here.

Earth Kids Elders Gear:

- Long pants (leggings, trousers, jeans)
- Two pairs of closed-toe shoes (e.g. gumboots, trainers or boots) and socks;
- Clothing (at least 2 sets) that allows them to move and play with ease and safety in wildspace;
- A well fitting hat; and
- A good quality raincoat.

Outdoor play makes for hungry, thirsty children! Children will also need:

- Lots of nutritious food, with no packaging/zero waste;
- A hydration pack with full water bladder;
- A small snack in the hydration pack; and
- A full water bottle for morning tea and lunch.

The hydration pack is an **essential** piece of kit – please do not come to Natureweavers without it. Hydration packs are worn on the children’s back and allow them to easily manage their own hydration when we are in the forest, without having to stop the group, take a backpack on and off and handle a water bottle. It also allows children to carry their own snack and whatever wondrous treasures they collect on our adventures. Hydration packs can be purchased online, or at stores such as BCF, Anaconda, Kathmandu etc. Please buy one that fits your child, and has a 1litre reservoir (at least). Please contact Carly if you are unsure about this essential piece of kit.

We encourage you to involve your children in packing and preparing for their days at forest school - it contributes to a growing awareness of their own basic needs in the bush and fortifies the self-responsibility we gently impart here at Natureweavers.



Parents at Earth Kids Elders

Earth Kids Elders is a child-only program. Parents do not stay. Elders children outnumber the adults, with the aim of allowing children to access the ‘wild savage’ within, tap into their strengths and share them with a group of peers, organise themselves democratically (through play) and generally direct the happenings of the group - it is our experience that they are less likely to do this when lots of adults are present, especially their parents! For this reason, Earth Kids Elders is a child-only program.

Children need to be ready to be at Earth Kids Elders – to be able to carry their own small backpack, go to the toilet themselves, and be comfortable without mum/dad/carer for the day. Of course, some children will need their parent to stay for a spell on the first few days to help them settle in. Please let us know if your child would prefer this approach so we can effectively manage the process in the best interests of the children and the spirit of the program. If your child is not quite ready to be away from you

for the day, please consider attending our Fledglings program on Tuesdays until such time that your child is ready for a full day of Elders.

There will be opportunities for parent participation throughout the year, including seasonal celebrations and various permaculture implementation projects (tree planting etc) that we would love for you to be a part of - invitations will be forthcoming!

Of course, we would love for you to share your skills and passions with our forest school children as well! Please be in touch if you have some expertise to share and we shall see if we can weave your magic into our program throughout the year!

Daily Times

Unless pre-arranged, please arrive at 9.00am. Please collect your children between 1.45 and 2.00pm, respecting the rhythm of the program and Carly's own family needs.

Drop off and pick up times can be busy. We ask for your support in maintaining calm, keeping your children and our animals safe and happy, and maintaining the ecological diversity of the property.

In the morning Please wait until the rainbow gates are open, then bring your child up on to the deck, and assist them to place their gear in one of the wooden lockers provided. Your child can then play on the mat, read a book, climb a tree, or have a nibble on some morning tea - whatever helps them to settle in to the space. Morning circle is our first gathering of the day – parents are welcome to stay for morning circle if they like and/or if your child needs you to be there. Once morning circle has finished, parents are asked to leave promptly.

In the afternoon Please gather your child's gear, including any wet shoes at the bottom of the stairs, then ensure your children are safely guided to your car from the deck. Late fees of \$30 per hour pro-rata after 2.00pm will be charged. If you are running late, please send your mentor an SMS as soon as you can so we can let your child know.

Earth Kids Elders is delivered between 9.00am and 2.00pm Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays. It is expected that your child will attend for this daily period and for at least 2 days per week.

Driveway access and parking

If you have a 4WD, please use it to come up the driveway - *without stopping* – and park at the top of the driveway, opposite the water tanks, tail in (preferable). Please do not park on the driveway itself or on the grass in front of the deck - this compromises access and visibility for all and is a hazard to our children and animals. If the parking spaces at the top of the block are full, please drive through (past the water tanks) and park on the west side of the house.

If you do not have a 4WD, please park at the bottom of the driveway (off to the side slightly) and walk up.

Illness

If your child is unwell, please do not attend Natureweavers. Please support your child's wellbeing, and honour the needs of the group as whole. If your child becomes unwell during the day, you, or your emergency contact provided, will be asked to come and collect them immediately.

Animals

Natureweavers is a working property, We currently have 2 dogs and 12 chickens. Children will be interacting with the dogs and the chickens regularly; the dogs accompany us on our forest walks, and we learn how to caretake, feed, and collect eggs from the chickens as part of our programs.

Siblings

Parents are wholly responsible for the health and safety of any siblings on the Natureweavers property at all times. Parents are liable for any breakages and/or damage to the Natureweavers property by children not enrolled in the Natureweavers Earth Kids Elders program.

Daytime communication

If you need to speak to your mentor directly about your child at Natureweavers, please come 15 minutes or so before pick up time to do so, or contact Carly throughout the week via email or phone.

We do carry a mobile phone throughout the day for security and photos only. Natureweavers policy is to answer mobile phones only to the parents of children in attendance that day. If you do happen to reach our voicemail on a day your child is attending, please leave a message and we will return your call as soon as we can.

Costs and invoicing

Invoices are sent monthly in advance via email. Payment terms are 7 days. We accept cash, card and direct transfer. Bank account details for transfer are included in your invoice.

Late invoices occur a fee of 5% per day. Late invoices not paid within 30 days will result in cancellation of your enrolment.

Payment plans can be arranged. If you would like to arrange a payment plan, please contact Carly to discuss.

Energy exchanges can also be arranged. Energy exchanges apply to the second of two days enrolment per week, which effectively means families pay \$70 for one day participation, and \$70 equivalent goods and services for the second day. Current energy exchanges with Natureweavers include: bulk dry goods, catered meals, massages, farm stock, and herbal products. We actively support the 'energy exchange economy' and are open to all new arrangements. Please contact Carly to discuss.

Absences

You will be charged a full days' fee for all absences, unless you provide 2 weeks notice. Attending extra days in lieu of an absence is possible. Absences can be 'made up' within 4 weeks of the absence occurring. Absences not made up within 4 weeks will be void. This policy also applies to energy exchanges if such an arrangement exists between Natureweavers and your family.

Enrolment

Natureweavers welcomes all new or interested families to spend a morning at Natureweavers, to meet the mentors, familiarise themselves with the program, ask any questions and make sure it resonates for all. A suitable day and date can be arranged with Carly via email (carly@natureweavers.com.au) or phone 0403 133 679.

A completed enrolment form is required and a non-refundable enrolment fee is payable prior to commencement at Earth Kids Elders.

Natureweavers is an independent program. Government rebates are not available to families. Natureweavers accepts unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or totally vaccinated children into our programs.

Cancellation of enrolment

4 weeks notice is required for cancellation of an enrolment, either from you or from Natureweavers.

School holidays

Earth Kids Elders is a term-based program. We do not operate during school holidays. We do offer holiday programs that may be of interest to you and your children during the holidays, and current Elders children get priority placing and a discounted rate in these programs (age-appropriate). Holiday program dates and locations will be communicated throughout the term.

Enquiries and Questions

If you have any questions about this information and these policies, please contact Carly carly@natureweavers.com.au or 0403 133 679.