

Children and nature

Many scientific research studies over the past decade have shown that contact with nature has positive effects on all major areas of your child's development! Children have been shown to play more cooperatively and creatively in natural outdoor spaces, developing their problem-solving skills and concentration. Regularly spending time in natural outdoor environments promotes general health as well as better eye sight. Children develop greater self-control and self-discipline, and also experience less stress and higher well-being. The evidence is in, that children need frequent, regular contact with nature. Let's give our kids some Vitamin Green!

Here at St John's preschool we take the children outside every day, unless the weather is particularly unfriendly, and we encourage their fascination with plants, bugs, birds, the sky, the weather and, of course, our chickens! We also enjoy taking the children outside the gate to enjoy the open green space of the church grounds.

As parents, it can be hard to factor in the time to get our kids out into nature regularly, but the benefits are enormous, not just for them but for us as well! There are some great parks in Ashfield, including Allman Park, Explorers Park and Ashfield Park... and of course the leafy grounds of St John's, right outside our preschool! You could venture further afield as well. Head down to the amazing Royal National Park for a day. Or google 'bushwalks in Sydney'. There are many possibilities both locally and further afield to take advantage of nature's bounty for you and your child.

Here's a recommended reading list to encourage you and your children to get out there and enjoy...

For parents:

Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv- '*Last Child in the Woods*' is the first book to bring together a new and growing body of research indicating that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults. More than just raising an alarm, Louv offers practical solutions and simple ways to heal the broken bond—and many are right in our own backyard.' (from richardlouv.com)

www.childreninnature.nsw.com.au

www.childrenandnature.org

For children:

A Walk in the Bush - by Gwyn Perkins

The Tiny Seed - by Eric Carle

The Curious Garden - by Peter Brown

The Dream of the Thylacine - by Margaret Wild & Ron Brooks

The Little Gardener - by Emily Hughes