



CAMP GAN YISROEL NSW
Chabad Youth NSW
Bush Play Policy

Aim

To help children develop positive attitudes and values towards nature, and to increase their inner wellbeing through nature-based and independent play.

Related Policies

- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Education Curriculum and Learning Policy
- Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy

Implementation

Bush Play programs help children and the service build connections and relationships with people, cultures and places in their local community, reflecting the unique geographical, cultural and community context of the service.

Educators in a Bush Play environment promote children's learning through a flexible program of off-site, child-led activities and play that build confidence, self-esteem and independence. Nature-based play increases children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional skills — encouraging creativity and resourcefulness, providing opportunities to interact with peers and learn collaboratively, promoting health and wellbeing, and reducing incidents of challenging behaviour.

To ensure children's safety and wellbeing, the Nominated Supervisor will consider the following when selecting a suitable Bush Play site:

- distance from the service and transportation requirements
- adequacy of pick-up and drop-off areas
- natural boundaries, terrain and the range of natural elements available
- distance from large bodies of water
- any hazards (e.g. ponds, nettles, wildlife) and options for addressing them
- issues affecting adequate supervision (e.g. surveillance points and lines of sight)
- adequacy of toilet facilities and water supplies (clean drinking water)
- safe handling, preparing and storing of food, including cooling facilities (may also be required for medications)
- options to meet children's sleep and rest needs, and shade
- parkland management support and accessibility for children with disabilities or mobility issues
- accessibility for emergency services and reliable mobile phone coverage
- nearby facilities that may offer shelter in extreme weather



The Nominated Supervisor and educators will also consider these issues in risk assessments for excursions, alongside clothing requirements (including sun protection consistent with our Sun Safety Policy), clear safety rules and boundaries, educator-to-child ratios and additional adults required, and inclusion of at least one educator with current first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis management training.

The Nominated Supervisor will consult with families when planning and implementing Bush Play programs, ensuring families can provide feedback or raise concerns. Consultation will include advice about:

- whether children can be dropped off/collected from the Bush Play venue, and if so, that parents/authorised persons must sign their child in and out and comply with our Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- the emergency and evacuation procedures for the Bush Play site, including routes to assembly points or nearby buildings
- clothing requirements (e.g. wet weather clothing, spare clothing)

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will obtain all necessary authorisations from parents/guardians before children participate, including an authorisation for a regular outing if the same level of risk applies on each visit.

The Bush Play environment will include some challenging elements that do not pose an unacceptable risk — for example sticks, rocks, fire pits, mud pits and water play — which contribute to a fun, child-led curriculum encouraging independent, nature-based play. Children will experience Bush Play in all types of weather unless conditions are extreme or there are severe weather warnings; the Nominated Supervisor will check for warnings before children leave. With appropriate clothing (coats, gloves, beanies, sunhats, gumboots, rain jackets), children can safely engage in a range of activities with wonderful learning outcomes.

Promoting Learning in Bush Play

Educators will promote learning by, for example:

- promoting Indigenous culture and connection to land (e.g. welcome to country, visits by Elders)
- helping children learn sustainable practices and develop respect and responsibility for the environment
- intentionally teaching relevant scientific concepts (e.g. the water cycle, geology, insect life)
- using strategic, open-ended questions to help children find their own answers
- modelling and encouraging reflective thinking
- allowing children to use natural materials such as wood, stone, sand, recycled materials and plants in art and play
- encouraging children to work independently or in groups to solve problems (e.g. building shelters)
- giving children time to explore and investigate without interruption
- developing sensory-motor skills, movement patterns and spatial awareness
- providing leadership opportunities (e.g. sun protection and safety reminders, group projects)



Sources

- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
- National Quality Standard

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted by management, employees, families and interested parties.

Last reviewed: 1 June 2023

Date for next review: June 2026