

Nature's Den Forest & Farm School Curriculum

Our forest & farm programme is based around an emergent curriculum. Our curriculum is open, rather than restricted, and remains child-led. A key feature of our curriculum is the project-based approach, which allows children to be given the time, space, and resources to lead their own learning and follow their own interests, rather than teacher-led experiences – even though the teachers play a role in facilitating the environment and providing provocations and group learning experiences to enrich their learning. These learning experiences are purely based around their emerging curiosities, interests and strengths.

Our curriculum values the children's ideas, experiences, interests and feedback, and the importance of children being able to reflect on their own work. This is done through taking ownership of their own learning and being able to evaluate and discuss it, such as coming together at the end of the day and being able to talk about the process of their learning.

Our curriculum is supported by the key competencies of the Early Childhood Curriculum (Te Whāriki) and the New Zealand School Curriculum. We are not tied to a tight schedule; every day is completely different offering many opportunities for children to develop a range of skills.



We aim to incorporate all curriculum areas, such as science, art, maths, physical education, oral language, and reading, through engaging and meaningful experiences. Children will

learn through authentic hands-on experiences, such as learning how to build huts, developing carpentry skills, cooking food on a campfire, collecting loose parts, and discovering who lives in our native bush.

The child's holistic development (social, emotional, spiritual, physical and cognitive) is nurtured through enriching free play experiences that fosters their curiosity, confidence, innovation, resilience and imagination.

"Giving your child extended periods of uninterrupted, child-directed play in nature, reduces your child's anxiety. Nature is healing." – Angela Hanscome

Providing the freedom to explore large open spaces is the most natural and effective method used by children to learn. Free play allows children to develop critical physical attributes such as determination, dexterity, coordination and muscle strength.

Children will build the confidence to problem-solve and take managed risks in a safe environment by spending quality time playing and learning outdoors 100% of the time, rain or shine. This will impact positively on children by giving them a high level of self-belief, a positive attitude, and greater independence with increased initiative-taking.

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood" – Fred Rogers

Our curriculum places an importance on creating strong relationships. We believe children thrive through building strong and effective relationships. Here at Nature's Den, we like to treat your children as if they were family. We engage with them with respect, warmth and care. We provide fun, creative and holistic learning opportunities within a safe and enhancing environment.

We ensure that all of our learning opportunities and experiences are inclusive of everyone. Our programme is mixed ages because we value the tuākana-teina relationship model which refers to older children who are more experienced in life (tuākana) helping and guiding the younger or less experienced children (teina) – TKI (Ministry of Education). Through these relationships, children will also experience opportunities to develop leadership skills, working theories together to problem-solve and learn how to care for and respect the environment as well as others.

