

Learning as a Journey of Exploration at Murdock Eco Early Learning Centre



Murdock Eco Early Learning Centre is a Bush Kindy by the Canning River, managed by Nicole Wortley, based on the sound Philosophy that children have lots to offer and their learning is a journey of exploration through 'many languages and rich meaningful experiences'. This Bush Kinder has been inspired by the Nature Pedagogy of 'Dr [Claire Warden](#) which highlights a sense of belonging to the land and working with nature not just to meet milestones but to journey through life.

Nicole, an animal advocate, says that animals are an essential component of this learning environment and as you enter Murdock you are greeted by Phoebe, the Eclectus parrot sitting on the receptionist's chair with guinea pigs, Angus and Freddie providing a soothing distraction to two littlies as they wander through their day, reluctant to go home.

This Kindy provides the children with multiple experiences on the lifecycles of nature. The gardens front and back have been designed to include textural experiences; the surfaces of paths, steps, logs, trees, shrubs, slides, a play cubby, sandpits, an old boat, a mud kitchen and a water pump. The mulberry trees are used to climb and forage in, the logs & sticks for tinkering & cubby house building, and the camp fire pit for gathering & children's acknowledgement of country each morning. Dry river beds and native plants provide habitats for the many rescued animals at the centre and the children are given agency to care for the quails, chooks, bobtail lizard, Stimpson's python, green tree frog, scorpion and tarantula on a daily basis. Learning to care for creatures crosses both cultural and language boundaries thus increasing the wellbeing for all children.

The children spend the majority of each day playing outside and Nicole is rightly proud to say that since taking over in August 2019, the centre has increased its intake by 40%.

Some of Nicole's staff, keen to embed biodiversity learning even further with the children in their care, registered for the NEW City of Canning's Little Green Steps – Biodiversity Awareness and Actions workshop. This workshop provides educators with plentiful actions and experiences to share with little children about the wetland habitats, plants and animals that exist along the Canning River and Murdock is ideally situated to fully explore this environment.



For further information on the Little Green Steps Program contact the LGSWA Education Officer, Megan Mentz, on 08 9461 7160 or send an email to m.mentz@aaeewa.org.au.