

# Early Childhood Case Study: Take Me Outside NSW

## Nature Connections at Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre

Cullunghutti Aboriginal Child and Family Centre is based in Nowra, on the land of the Wadi Wai Wandandian People. The Centre provides both a long day care and preschool service. Cullunghutti is a special place for children and families to connect, grow, and learn together, reflecting and strengthening Aboriginal identity within the wider community.

### **Why did you start your nature connections program?**

Children continue to show an interest in their connection to their land, as the majority of our children come from Indigenous background. We cannot deny that connection hence we strengthen it every day.

Children have access to their surrounding local nature walking distance from the services. It is a daily practice and not separated from the daily activities. Our nature play is not planned, it is led by children and their conversations. It is a brainstorming sessions with no time limitations if we can afford it.

Our nature play program drives the curriculum in our centre and goes hand in hand with the play based learning program. We involve the Elders in our program, especially to work out what land we can access. Families are always welcome to accompany and learn with us when they have time. Feedback from families and children is always how much they love their time in nature.

### **What are 2 challenges that you faced during this program, how have you overcome them?**

1. Limited time in the day!
2. Funding for resources for a rainy day. We extended exploration time and asked parents to bring their own raincoats and gumboots.

### **Do you have other sustainability initiatives in place in your service?**

We recycle, reuse resources and reduce waste where possible.

### **What advice would you give to other ECCs considering a nature play program?**

Do not hesitate and do it! You would rather do it imperfectly, than not do it at all.