

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## The Physical Environment

There are so many possibilities for play, learning and exploration outside. One of the values that most families and educators want to instil in children is a love of nature and enjoyment of the outdoors. It isn't actually a matter of instilling however – it's more a matter of nurturing and supporting the interest in the natural environment that very young children already have. Birds, butterflies, rain, puddles, leaves blowing in the wind, flowers, stones, dirt, sand, mud and grass are all sources of wonder and interest to babies and toddlers.

The outdoors is indeed a stadium for the athletic pursuits of under three's whether it is creeping through the grass on hands and knees, mastering the tricky obstacle course, pushing a small pram in a relative straight line along the footpath, getting the hang of catching a ball or running and stopping, or moving freely in a large space because it feels so good to be able to do it by yourself. The outdoors is so much more than a space for gross motor activities: it is a laboratory for eager children to experiment and find out about their world; it is a gallery full of beautiful, engaging and mysterious objects to admire; and it's a concert hall filled with intriguing sounds.

What is required by educators is to slow down to children's time and try to open our eyes and ears to how children are experiencing things – what they find interesting and engaging. Often it isn't the same thing that adults find interesting or that we expect them to be impressed with. Educators sharing children's experiences need to be involved in a way that still lets the child be in charge of the experience; they need to show interest, talk about what is happening, and share in the surprise, discovery, amusement and satisfaction. These are wonderful ways to assist children's learning.

At Withcott Early Childhood Centre we believe in the natural learning environment and we provide experiences that explore and enhance an appreciation of the wonders of the outdoors: from growing vegetables to have at lunchtimes to finding tadpoles and watching them change into frogs.

If you would like any more information on the Centre please call in and have a look around or contact either Robyn or Debbie on 4630 3722

*This article was taken from an information sheet for Get Down and Dirty Outside by Anne Stonehouse.*

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## **About Churches of Christ Care**

Churches of Christ Care are a division of Churches of Christ in Queensland—a group of churches that is part of the worldwide Christian church.

We strive to create an inclusive, caring, compassionate environment that meets our clients' needs without discrimination or prejudice. Everyone is welcome to call on our help regardless of their religious background.

Churches of Christ Care are one of Queensland's leading providers of early childhood, child protection, affordable housing, and retirement living and aged care services. We are a not-for-profit organisation that supports more than 27,000 clients each year in urban, rural and remote areas.

We operate 137 services throughout Queensland with the support of more than 2,800 staff and over 700 volunteers.

Churches of Christ Care are built on a foundation of Christian values, commitment to quality care, and trust and respect for clients and the community.