

Bush Kinder Program

We proudly acknowledge that Darebin Parklands sits on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung land, and we teach children to be mindful guests on Country – to listen, observe, and care for the environment as part of our shared responsibility.

Each week, our four-year-old children attend Bush Kinder one day per week, while our three-year-old group participates one day per fortnight. The program takes place at the beautiful Darebin Parklands, a rich and diverse natural environment that offers endless possibilities for exploration, learning, and adventure.

Bush Kinder nurtures children's curiosity, creativity, and confidence through hands-on experiences in nature. Whether building shelters, observing insects, climbing logs, or engaging in imaginative play, children learn to assess risk, problem-solve, and collaborate with their peers – all while developing a deep appreciation for the environment around them.

The program promotes the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) outcomes, particularly in fostering a strong sense of identity, wellbeing, and connection to the world.

Koorie Curriculum and Indigenous Perspectives

Our Bush Kinder program respectfully embeds Koorie perspectives and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as an integral part of learning.

Children explore the Indigenous seasonal calendar – recognising the natural cycles, plants, animals, and weather patterns that shape life on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country. Through stories, symbols, art, and guided reflection, children learn to care for Country, understand its significance, and build empathy and respect for its Traditional Custodians.

Why Bush Kinder Matters

The Bush Kinder experience supports children to:

- Build resilience, independence, and self-regulation.
- Develop respect and care for the natural environment.
- Strengthen gross and fine motor skills through active exploration.
- Engage in meaningful connections with Koorie culture and Country.
- Foster problem-solving, teamwork, and imaginative thinking.

At Smart Start ELDC, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to learn through nature, culture, and community – developing a lifelong love for the world around them.

