

Developmental Curriculum - Open Ended Learning Activities

Through our Developmental Curriculum, we believe in the importance of students developing 21st century learning skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, resilience, perseverance, communication, collaboration, self-awareness, emotional/social skills, curiosity and creativity - alongside the explicit teaching of literacy, numeracy and other key curriculum areas.

Open ended learning experiences are critically important for the development of children's bodies and brains. Through developmentally appropriate learning activities, we can capitalise on a wide variety of "teachable moments."

The Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework identifies 5 learning and development outcomes for all children in Victoria from birth to age 8:

- For children to have a strong sense of identity
- For children to be connected with and contribute to their world
- For children to have a strong sense of wellbeing
- For children to be confident and involved learners
- For children to become effective communicators

Through open ended learning experiences, we can support the development of each of these outcomes. In the process of learning in the early years of primary school, the focus on the journey and the process of learning is extremely important – not just the end product.

Below are a range of dramatic play, role play, craft/college play, creative play, sensory play, music play, nature play, construction play, tinkering play, science play, imaginative play and physical play activities. We know that students are highly engaged in learning experiences that are authentic, relevant and meaningful to them. We hope you have fun while you are learning together as a family!

Go on a nature scavenger hunt in your backyard. What can you find? Flowers, seed pods, feathers, sticks. Create a list.

Cardboard box creations - what can you create with old boxes and masking tape?
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Build a city with items you can find around the house. Can you make a road? A house?
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Create your own sensory bin - use rice, water, playdough, shaving cream, natural materials.

Create your own dramatic play area - a shop, the vet, a cafe, a school!

Order items around the house by size, colour, shape.
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Looks for shapes and patterns in nature.
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Collect leaves, seed pods, flowers, stones, sticks to make a nature mandala.
Create handmade paint brushes from sticks, grass, seaweed, leaves, bark & wool/string.
Make ink paint/pigment from crushed rocks, berries and flowers, tea - grind, mix and experiment.
Make a handmade book stitched with threads - cardboard, fabric, paper and leaves.
Use a mortar and pestle to make potions and perfumes - use flowers, herbs, tea, seeds.
Have a tea party with dolls and teddies. How many cups/plates will you need? Make food out of playdough. Pour drinks from a teapot. Create a menu.
Watch ants, birds, butterflies and bees. Observe the clouds racing across the sky. Write/draw what you see.
Observe who lives in the trees - watch, draw, label, write.
Make a stick loom - weave leaves, bark, flowers and herbs.
Keep a picture diary/journal - weather, birds, insects, experiments, creations.
Press flowers and leaves in a book.
Listen to music while you paint - explore different types of music and see how your painting changes.
Draw a picture/write a letter to a member of our community or your neighbour.
Build! With blocks, with lego, with playing cards, with plastic cups, etc. Draw your plans before you start building. Take a photo of your construction - can you label all the parts/pieces you used?
Create your own secret code - use numbers, symbols, letters, pictures.
Be a photographer - make a list of items to photograph around the house/garden.
Build a tent/cubby in the lounge room to snuggle up and read your favourite books.
Make an old sock puppet. Put on a puppet play for your family!
Design your own board game. Create the rules and instructions. Teach someone how to play it.
Acts of kindness - Pay someone a compliment, make someone a card, draw them a picture, post a letter.
Create a story bag - collect items that relate to a picture story book. Can your family figure out what story it is?

Make a list - write/draw a list of things that you're grateful for, things that make you happy, things that you are good at, your favourite toys, etc.
Design an obstacle course - how fast can you complete it?
Invent something new - draw/write your new invention.
Make up a dance routine to your favourite song.
Read your favourite books to your teddies.
Create with recycled/reused materials that you can find around the house.
Draw your view - look out your window and draw/write/label what you see.
Make playdough together. Follow the recipe, take photos of each step, sequence. Use playdough to make letters, numbers, pretend food, etc.
Tinkering - find old (safe) electrical items that you can take apart, explore. What can you turn the pieces into? Draw and label your plans.
Cook together - homemade pizzas, icy poles, popcorn, playdough, slime, applesauce, fruit salad, etc.
Chalk drawing/painting - make a hopscotch, write a message to your neighbours, draw a picture, write letters/numbers.
Make a necklace - cut up a packet of straws, use pasta noodles, thread them onto string/wool.
Make flower soup - add flowers, leaves, seeds. Add cups, bowls, containers and share!
Write your name on a big piece of paper - use stickers to trace the letters.
Freeze objects (small toys, dice, letters, stones/gems, flowers) into ice. Let the ice melt, use tools to crack the items out, time how long it takes to melt, etc.
Use watercolour paints to paint ice.
Use masking tape to create different patterns (straight lines, zig zags, shapes, dashed lines) to follow and balance along. Walk, jump, hop along the lines.
Create a small world invitation by setting up some animal toys, people, cars in new ways. Find books/picture story books to add ideas.
Make mud pies! Add a pair of scissors and some bottles of water (coloured with food dyes). Use flowers, rocks, seeds, flowers, grass. How much does a mud pie cost? Create a menu with prices.
Trace patterns on a big sheet of paper (wavy lines, zigzags, spirals). Using a cotton bud, trace or dot along the lines with paint.

Put coloured cardboard/paper on the floor - find objects around the house that match each colour, sort and classify.
Collect a variety of loose parts around the house/garden - make a collage using scrap paper, scissors and glue.
Add some sponges and containers to a tub of soapy water. Wash the dishes, the teddies/dolls. Practice squeezing the sponges to fill the containers with water.
Have a colour bath! Add a few drops of food colouring to the bath - add cups and bowls.
Make a sensory small world in the sink! Add some plants, small animal figurines/toys.
Create a nature cutting tray by collecting leaves, twigs, grass, flowers. Use scissors to cut the natural loose parts.
Ask someone in your family to draw a scribble on a piece of paper - finish the picture and turn it into something else.
Make your own paints with whatever you can find around the house - dirt, food dye, beetroot, etc.
Create your own cartoon character. Write/draw your own story. Include a beginning/middle/end.
Create a visual alphabet - draw a picture of something that starts with each letter.
Choose one shape. Draw a picture using only the shape.
Draw a still life picture of objects around the house - a teddy, a bowl of fruit, a toy, etc.
Create a new song - or change the words to one that already exists.
Put on a performance for your family - sing, dance, play an instrument. Design and draw a new musical instrument. Make your own musical instrument with things you can find around the house.
Create a rhythm using your body, ie using your hands to pat your body to make sounds in a pattern.
Start a band with other members of your family!
Play catch, skip, hop, juggle, plank! Create your own workout.
Find out where the bones in your body are. Trace your body and label.
Draw your bike - label all the parts.
Create your own marble run!

Find things around your house that are magnetic/not magnetic - make a list/draw.
Create a maze - use ramps, bridges, turns.
Create a sensory water tunnel area with pipes, tubes.
Fruit and vegetable painting - ie, use apples to make prints on paper.
Play dress ups as a whole family - who am I?
Dress up in clothes for different seasons - guess the season.
Create a squishy bag experiment in a plastic ziplock bag. Use your hands to blend and squish the different coloured paints together to form new colours.
Use food colouring to dye spaghetti noodles - describe how it feels! Squishy!
Make coloured rice!
Make your own bookmark.
Create your own fairy garden using flowers, rocks, sticks, natural materials. Add ecofriendly glitter. Draw/write about your fairy garden.
Create an outdoor music wall with pots, pans, tins. Put on a concert for your family!
Create your own memory game on a tray - add and take objects ... what's missing?

“Play gives children a chance to PRACTICE what they are LEARNING.”
- Fred Rogers