



# Puggles Play

## Preschool Program



This Puggle Play early years learning program has been developed with the intention of reconnecting children to nature, through experiences that support and promote the development across the 5 outcomes areas in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Frameworks (VEYLDF).

The beauty and ease of this program is that the experiences are clear, precise and provide a list of resources if required. They provide skills and information that is transferable across home and bush kinder environments and provide strong foundation blocks for future learning in environmental awareness. This program is connected to the local environment at The Briars and provides a safe and open space to explore animals, flora, fauna and sustainable ways to look after this ever-changing environment we call home on the Mornington Peninsula.

South Mornington Preschool has had the absolute pleasure of collaborating with The Briars and the Rangers in the capacity of providing feedback on the experiences you'll find within this program. Immerse yourself in this space with your students, learn, grow and have fun.

*"Nature is a tool to get children to experience not just the wider world, but themselves" – Stephen Moss*



Joanne Churcher  
South Mornington Preschool



Welcome to the Briars Puggle Play Preschool Program. Designed for bush kinder groups at the Briars, Puggle Play consists of 9 different activities for kinder teachers to facilitate with children over a full term of bush kinder. The activities are perfect to add to your existing bush kinder program.

Each week includes a description, some suggested activities and any equipment you might need.

Puggle Play Preschool Program is designed to be flexible. Sessions can be delivered in any order, and you can tailor each week to suit you and your children's needs.

We invite kinder kids and teachers to use the Puggle Play Program to explore outdoors, be curious, learn to nurture plants and animals, and engage positively with our community.

If you have any questions about the program, activities, materials or your class's visit to the Briars please contact us or see us in the Visitor Centre.



# Puggles Play

## VEYLDF Outcome 1 - Identity

For their first week of Puggles Play at the Briars, children (Puggles) will learn all about the life of an echidna. These mammals lay eggs classifying them as a monotreme alongside their platypus cousins. Once hatched from their egg, baby echidnas are known as puggles!

Overtime echidnas develop spines to deter predators and use their long snout and sticky tongue to dig and slurp up ants. To help them push soil away when digging, their back feet, face backwards.

To keep cool on a hot day, echidnas blow bubbles from their snouts. During mating season, male echidnas will follow a female and form a chain of two to ten males hoping to mate with her.

### Activities include:

- Practice blowing bubbles from a bubble wand with air from your nose
- Play follow the leader to form your own echidna train
- Practice rolling into a ball like an echidna
- Put your shoes on backwards and try to walk

### Materials:

- Bubble wands





## How big am I?

VEYLDF Outcome 4 - Learning

This weeks theme is all about growth and development. All living things must grow and develop throughout their lifetime.

Some babies start in the pouch of their mother, others hatch from an egg in a nest. As baby animals grow, they may start to develop fur, feathers or spines.

For this session, Puggles can head onto the Woodland Walk and as a group find a stick taller than the tallest Puggle. Teachers can use a marker to measure all the Puggles heights and write down their name.

### Materials

- Coloured permanent markers to mark the Puggle's heights

Do this at the start of the season, keep the stick over the season and puggles can see if they have grown throughout their Bush Kinder sessions in their last week.



# Wildlife Watchers

VEYLDF Outcome 5 - Communication

The Briars Wildlife Sanctuary is home to an abundance of wildlife; from Eastern Grey Kangaroos and Swamp Wallabies, to Black Swans and Emus. They like to roam around our entire Wildlife Sanctuary so it makes it extra special when you see one of our furry or feathery friends.

## Activities:

Puggles can wonder along our wetland walk to spot some wildlife. Make sure to take note of where you spotted each animal! Can you think of a fact about each animal? Do they jump? What do they eat? What sound/call do they make?

Once you return from your walk, help other visitors spot the wildlife you have seen by updating the map outside the Visitor Centre. Place the picture of the animal you spotted, in the area you spotted it on the map!

If you see a rare animal like our very special koalas, the Visitor Centre staff would love to hear about it!





# Teeny Tiny Rangers

VEYLDF Outcome 2 - Community

Puggles will become a Mini Ranger by talking to visitors and caring for the environment by collecting any rubbish they find.

See below for some facts to tell visitors:

- The property is 220ha while the Wildlife Sanctuary is 96ha
- There is a homestead garden visitors can walk around including a heritage seed garden.
- There are 4 emus in the Sanctuary and they are all named Steve.
- The most common bird visitors will see around the garden is the Purple Swamp Hen. Look for a red beak, red legs and a purple feathers!

Chat to us at the Visitors Centre if you would like any more facts!

**Materials:**

- Rubbish bin and tongs



# Early Explorers

VEYLDF Outcome 3 – Wellbeing

Use all your senses and wander through our Sanctuary... what animals can you hear? What plants can you smell? Touch the moss, bark, leaves, seeds. Describe how each of them feel. How many trees can you see?

This weeks theme is all about the senses and mindfulness within nature. Find a quiet space and try and describe what you can hear, smell, see and touch.

Puggles can fully immerse themselves within the natural environment and observe nature happening all around them, all of the time. They will also gain a sense of appreciation for nature and use it to harness peace and calmness.

## Activities include:

- Find leaves with different textures and smells
- Silent listening to bird, insect and frog calls
- Lie on the grass and watch the clouds
- Hug a tree





# Bush Art

VEYLDF Outcome 1 – Identity  
VEYLDF Outcome 5 - Communication

Playing in nature is important for Puggles to develop their creative side and imagination. Using sticks, leaves, flowers, grass, rocks for art is a great way to allow kids to explore creatively in an environmentally friendly way.

Art can also accelerate Puggles confidence and independence as well as allow them to improve their social skills while working with one another.

## Activities include:

- Create an Australian animal of your choice out of sticks
- Find as many different coloured leaves and create a rainbow
- Create a mandala out of sticks and flowers





# Storytime

VEYLDF Outcome 5 - Communication

Sit inside the Briars Visitor Centre and enjoy a story from our Book Nook. All of our books are educational and relevant to our local flora and fauna. Follow the tales of Kurboroo or learn how fungi shape the earth. There are plenty of adventures to be had inside when the Puggles can't explore outside.

Some of the books we have available are:

- 'An Antechinus in the Attic' by Viarnne Mischon
- 'On the Trail of the Plains-wanderer' by Rohan Cleave
- 'Platypus' by Sue Whiting and Mark Jackson
- 'Wilam' by Aunty Joy Murphy and Andrew Kelly
- 'Plantastic! A to Z of Australian Plants' by Catherine Clowes
- 'Deep' by Jess McGeachin

This activity can be completed on a rainy or windy day. If you need some warming up, ask a Briars staff member to light the indoor fire. We can also provide mats to sit on.

Please let us know in the Visitor Centre when you plan on having some Storytime.





# Super Seeds or Wicked Weeds

VEYLDF Outcome 4 - Learning

## Super Seeds (Summer and Autumn)

This week Puggles will learn what a seed is and how seeds spread in their environment. Some seeds can spread in the wind, by water, by animals (in their poo!) and by people. Teachers can collect some grass seeds (Phragmites) on the wetland walk with Puggles for their activities.

### Activities:

- Hold the grass seed flat in your hand and blow to observe how wind spreads seed.
- Drop some grass seed into Balcombe creek to watch how water carries seeds.
- Find some wallaby poo and squash it with a stick. What do you see inside?

## Wicked Weeds (late Winter and Spring)

Cape Weed and Forget Me Nots are two invasive weeds that grow here at the Briars! To help stop the spread of weeds, we collect the plants before they flower and make seeds!

### Activity:

- Pick Cape Weed and Forget Me Not flowers
- Make flower crowns and necklaces from the flowers



# Bush Reflections

VEYLDF Outcome 1 – Identity  
VEYLDF Outcome 5 - Communication

This week Puggles graduate from their Puggle Play Program and are now a fully grown Echidna! Puggles will receive a badge handmade by our Rangers and take part in activities to reflect on their time as Puggles at the Briars.

## Activities include:

- Sharing their favourite stories and memories from the program
- Educators can read their favourite quotes from the Puggles
- Measure height on the measuring stick from 'How Big am I' to see how much the Puggles have grown
- Make your own clay echidna


## Materials:

- Air dry clay
- Assorted sticks and other bits (for echidna spines, eyes, etc)
- Measuring stick from 'How Big Am I?'
- Coloured markers



## Contact us

 450 Nepean Highway, Mt Martha

 5950 1221

 [the.briars@mornpen.vic.gov.au](mailto:the.briars@mornpen.vic.gov.au)