

“Why does the flame move back and forth?” Robert

At Modbury Kindy we embrace winters natural beauty often by a glorious fire shared together. While the risks with fire are real, teaching children to have a healthy respect for fire and the rules around its use, provides them with a life skill and minimises the risk of serious harm or injury.



“The fire is a rainbow colour, I can see the yellow and pink, that is all the Kindy around the fire in our circle. You sit there so you don’t get burnt” Pippa



The dancing flame

Children let themselves be fascinated by the bright, warm, moving flame as they were invited to sit around the campfire. Charcoal sparked imagination and creativity as the children observed, exploring cautiously, careful of the marks, watchful not to smudge their own. As children expressed their ideas through drawings, their considerations stretch beyond flames to the work of those alongside them.



“Painting up and up and up, this way and that way like a dance” Robert



“My flame is wobbly moving like a wibbly worm” Lucas



“This is a dangerous fire, a volcano, the fire is at the top and this is all the smoke, wooooohhhhhh. You can cover your eyes like at Kindy with your jumper” Nathan

Benefits

- Provides an authentic and relevant experience for children.
- Marc Armitage (2001) says 'there is nothing like it for the noise it makes or how it looks or the obvious power it has – and that fascinates children who want to experience it'.
- Provides opportunity to embed 'real life' learning into an education program and allows children to demonstrate their competence and capability.
 - Children who cook on fire can see the changes taking place and are more likely to eat or at least try what they have prepared.
- Connect children to Country through exploring Aboriginal perspectives and how the Kurna people use fire as a sustainability practice. Teaches assessment of risks and an understanding of fire, a healthy respect for fire and the rules around its use, provides them with a life skill and minimises the risk of serious harm or injury.

At Modbury Kindy

- Campfires are during Term 2 and 3, families are notified of dates in newsletters at the start of each term. Educators and children never have fires in Fire Danger Season or on fire-ban days.
- Metropolitan fire Service are invited on site to engage in the children's risk benefit and talk fire safety
- Educators write risk assessment and invite family input
- Children are invited to create a risk benefit
- Children are invited to use charcoal for painting and drawing
- Children harvest produce from the food garden for cooking
- Conversations around fire and how it is used in difference cultures
- Families are invited to join our campfires as volunteers or on project mornings
- Staffing: 2 staff are always around the campfire area to maintain adequate supervision.
- Weather: In extreme weather campfires are cancelled.



References

Learning Outdoors Benefits and Risks, Nature Play SA in collaboration with Department for Education and Child Development (DECD), Catholic Education SA, Association of Independent Schools SA (AISSA), Kidsafe SA,
2009, Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, Australian government Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian governments



"My flame is rolling down like this. Here are my risks writing" Charli

Research

- A 2011 Planet Ark Study showed that 1 in 10 children today play outside once per week or less.1 Children's free time has become structured and watched over by adults. Technology dictates their lives and Australian children of all ages are too sedentary and not physically active enough.
- When outdoor learning environments are places that allow inspiration and creativity to take root, for curiosity and spontaneity to be realised and importantly, for risk and failures to be viewed as positive learning experiences, children will be the beneficiaries. This learning can help them develop the life skills and awareness they need to be confident, resilient and able-bodied adults who take responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- Professor Guy Claxton talks about powerful learning as mind stretching, a disposition that can be learned and fostered. His vocabulary describes the wondering, engaging, explaining, experimenting, imagining, reasoning, collaborating and reflecting - all positive attributes that children utilise when engaged in outdoor play and learning. Nature based playgrounds can work effectively to build powerful learning opportunities for children and promote a growth mindset through the provision of risk, challenge, engagement and process-based play.



"The Aboriginal people had the fire and they had the charcoal and they drew on the rocks so you could find the and the food" Alia