

# Case Study

## Honeybee Preschool Warners Bay



### Outside and active in ALL weather

At Honeybee Preschool in Warners Bay, a successful indoor-outdoor play program is in full swing.

When asked about the inspiration behind this initiative, Nominated Supervisor Mel explained, "There's nothing you do inside that you can't do outside. But it doesn't work the other way around." This philosophy sparked the program's development, which began about eight years ago and has since become a cornerstone of the preschool's approach.



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**When it rains, we put on gumboots! When it's cold, we wear a jumper!**



- Comments from children

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The idea of an indoor-outdoor play program was first introduced during one of the daily meetings attended by both Educators and children. Mel, who had conducted extensive research on the concept, shared her findings with the group.

While everyone recognized the many benefits of indoor-outdoor play, some Educators expressed concerns. These included challenges with supervision, the potential for missing important educational activities, an increased risk of accidents, and the unpredictable nature of weather conditions.

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**There is nothing you can do inside that you can't do outside**

- Mel, Nominated Supervisor

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'The heart of a child'  
by Worimi Artist  
Lara Went

**Good for kids**  
Good for life






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## Overcoming challenges

To address the challenges raised by Educators, several steps were taken:

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**Rearranging physical spaces:** This involved making play equipment portable, maximising the use of a large, shaded veranda, and reallocating the budget to install additional shading.
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**Leveraging strong community and family collaborations:** Volunteer Dads built an outdoor wooden kitchen, a local sewing club donated loose parts, and families contributed portable play equipment.
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**Fostering a trusting environment:** Educators were empowered to use their judgment, ensuring children were supervised while still given the freedom to run, play, take risks, and explore.

After implementing the indoor-outdoor model of free play, the number of accidents at Honeybee Preschool actually decreased!



### This is what the children wanted!

For services who are considering the idea of implementing indoor-outdoor free play, Mel advises; "Keep an open mind and a positive attitude, give it a go and stick with it despite the challenges"

**Week by week, children expressed unwavering enthusiasm for playing outdoors.**

When asked if it was worth the time and effort, Mel chuckled and simply said, "Look around!"

Beyond making the children happy, active, and engaged; the process has also strengthened and united the entire team and reinforced Honeybee Preschool's core philosophy, culture, and priorities.



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