



# Case Study

## Yarm Gwanga Preschool and Early Education Centre

### After the storm

*Yarm Gwanga Preschool and Early Education Centre share their experience implementing indoor-outdoor play, including how they overcame some unique and unexpected challenges:*

In 2021, "a tornado hit our centre and we had to move our operations to a temporary location. The temporary location was a large hall with a small outdoor area, and not purpose-built for Early Childhood Education and Care."

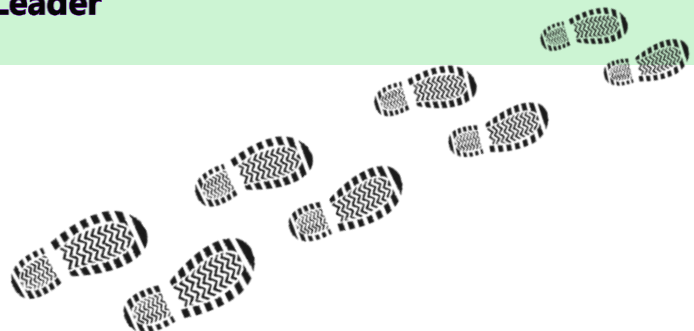
"We were able to obtain fencing to secure some outdoor play space and apply for a waiver from the Department of Education to navigate the reduced physical space. All of this happened while we were still in the thick of COVID and were being told that keeping groups of children and educators separated as much as possible would help ease the spread through ECEC services."

**"Needless to say, these considerations made our days interesting!"**



**"It would have been so easy to allow the challenges to beat us, but we have found that the benefits of outdoor play have made the perseverance worth the effort!"**

**Tammy Paterson-O'Kane, Educational Leader**



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

Good for kids  
Good for life







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### Overcoming challenges

“In order to minimise the mixing of rooms/groups during COVID, the educators embraced the idea of “out the gate” play. We conducted a risk assessment of the surrounding area and sought permission from families for an “out the gate” routine excursion. The preschool room head out the gate at least 3 times a week - they explore the surrounding bushland and climb nearby trees. On the days when they are not out the gate, the pre-schoolers have extended periods of outdoor play. We take advantage of shaded areas and often eat lunch and rest outside.”



“Our temporary space is not ideal for indoor-outdoor play as the inside space is very large and supervision of the space is an issue if we have staff spread indoors and outdoors. Rather than limit the amount of outdoor play, the educators have embraced it. They have found shade, conducted risk assessments, and sought year-long permission from families for the “out the gate” program.”

**“...despite the challenges, we are engaging in more outdoor play now than previously.”**

“We have recently reflected on our outdoor play practices, which showed that despite the challenges, we are engaging in more outdoor play now than previously.”



“This has so many benefits, including:

- ✔ Physical health, fitness, and wellbeing
- ✔ Whole body integration for some of our children with sensory challenges, and
- ✔ Social interaction



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