



Case Study Merriwa Preschool

The Push We Needed!

Merriwa Preschool shares their experience of attempting to implement indoor-outdoor play in the past, and how support from the Good for Kids Get Outside, Get Active (GOGA) program ultimately helped make the initiative a success.

Previously, the educators at Merriwa Preschool tried to introduce indoor-outdoor play, but the approach didn't quite work as expected. The service recognised the importance of giving children more autonomy in their play, allowing them to self-regulate their needs, and offering flexibility in the daily routine through indoor-outdoor play. However, they struggled to make it work effectively.

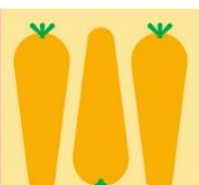
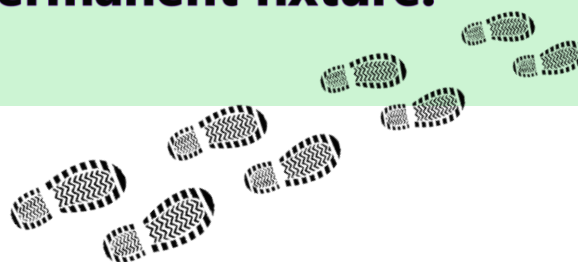
"When GOGA approached us with additional strategies and more options for children to be active, as well as practical solutions for implementing indoor-outdoor play, we realized this was the push we needed to truly commit to our goal," shared GOGA Champions Nikki and Cassie.

Now, the children have the freedom to decide whether they want to play inside or outside as soon as they arrive at preschool. To facilitate this, educators ensure that resources and equipment are available in both indoor and outdoor spaces. The service has also made necessary adjustments to its practices to ensure proper supervision of children both indoors and outdoors, while taking indoor activities outdoors when possible. Additionally, the service has updated its policies to reflect these changes.

The educators continue to reflect on the success of indoor-outdoor play during staff meetings and gather feedback through surveys to ensure ongoing improvement.



Indoor-outdoor play at Merriwa Preschool "will be a permanent fixture."



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

Good for kids
Good for life





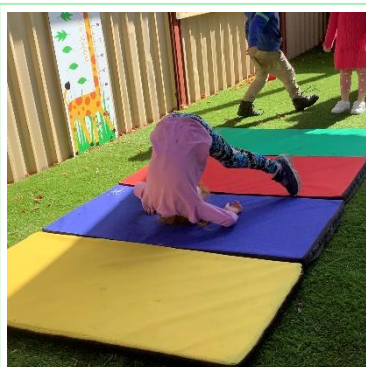
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Overcoming Challenges

Implementing indoor-outdoor play has now become an integral part of the service's daily routine. Since the introduction of this practice, several positive changes have been observed at the service, including:

- Reduced noise levels indoors;
- Children becoming more attuned to their bodies and practicing self-regulation;
- More manageable group sizes, with children spread between indoor and outdoor spaces;
- More opportunities for one-on-one interactions; and
- A reduction in adverse behaviours.

"It may take a while for it to run smoothly and to get everyone on board, however it is worth it. Don't let obstacles stop you, have someone to bounce ideas off, and support each other."



While the educators had initial concerns about implementing indoor-outdoor play during extreme weather conditions, these concerns were addressed with thoughtful adjustments. For hot weather, activities like water play were set up in shaded areas to ensure children could still play comfortably outdoors. During colder weather, families were asked to provide suitable clothing to support outdoor play. Although heavy rain sometimes made outdoor play challenging, the service found creative solutions by using umbrellas to provide outdoor experiences despite the weather."

Overall, having a dedicated team to implement indoor-outdoor play and support one another has been truly amazing," shared Nikki and Cassie.

"After a lot of work with policies and getting everyone on board, it is very worthwhile for all. Don't let any obstacle get in the way - once all the crinkles are ironed out the program runs smoothly."



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