

# NATURE EXPLORERS

MAGAZINE



# Just watch



We often put very little value on play, isn't it what you do when you have done everything else?  
(this could apply to adults as well as children)

Or else we're quick to direct our children's play with comments that we perhaps don't realise can be quite negative and can dent our children's confidence in their own ability.

Children need uninterrupted periods of time to play with open ended resources and preferably outside in the ever changing natural environment. They need to be able to play without questions, without direction. They need to be allowed to go into their own play 'zone'. If you can be respectful of their place and space and just observe you may be surprised at how much they are learning. Sit down quietly a little away from your child and just watch. Watch their eye hand co-ordination, their problem solving skills, the way they try things - again and again. Think about what they are learning through their own trial and error. This is also building their resilience and confidence in themselves to keep trying.

We've probably all heard the child who in frustration says "I can't do it!" and we often rush in to do it for them - what have they learned? That the adults in their life agree - you can't do it. We teach them 'learned helplessness.' However, if you pause before rushing in, you may be surprised at how resourceful your child can be. They may look to you to do it for them, but wait, if they ask you, suggest that you can help them, try to do as little as possible, but encourage them to have a go, with patience you can allow your child to work it out.

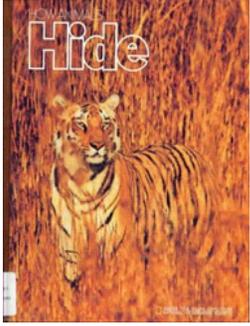
Children also learn from each other, sometimes not in quite the way we would like! However, once again, just watch and providing no one is getting hurt, allow them the time to sort it out. You may then realise how much they have learned from the modelling you provide consciously and unconsciously.

"If the child initiates it and it doesn't work the child will come back to it.

"If there is 'external expectation' and it doesn't work the child perceives that they have failed." -  
Pennie Brownlee

## NATURE EXPLORERS

### ➔ Armchair Explorer



How Animals Hide;  
National Geographic  
Society Books for  
Young Explorers

Text and photographs demonstrate how animals protect themselves through their natural coloring or shape. This is an old but great book! You can find it online as an e-book.



### ➔ Useful App



PlantNet

P  
Identify, explore and share  
your observations of wild plant

@ntNet is a tool to help to identify  
plants with pictures.



## MICROADVENTURES

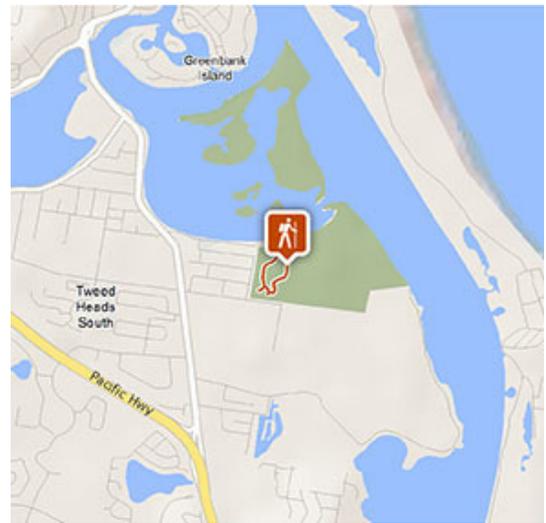
### ➔ In the heart of the local wilderness....



A hidden natural treasure just up the road, is the serene Cudgen Lake, often referred to as Cabarita Lake by locals. Great for a family day out, head to Willow Avenue, off Tamarind Avenue in Cabarita Beach and enjoy picnicking by the lake. The kids will love swimming in the shallow calm waters of the lake. Launch your sail boat from the boat ramp or try your kayak or paddleboard and head off to explore the vast water that covers 160 hectares of the Cudgen Reserve. Try your luck fishing, or just sit back and enjoy the tranquility.

The Lake was once a prime location for watersports and many locals had learnt to waterski or swim at the lake, but in 1995 motorised watersports were banned for environmental reasons, and the landmark became forgotten. With thanks to the community and Lake Cabarita restaurant which is situated beside the lake, the area is becoming known to the locals and people are starting to come back and enjoy this stunning natural area. The restaurant and function centre hosts many events including community markets, workshops and networking events in the beautiful surroundings. From the lake, the views are breathtaking, the majestic Round Mountain in the south and striking views to the west of Wollumbin Mount Warning. Cudgen Lake lies at the heart of the Cudgen Reserve which covers an area of 464 hectares and is part of the largest remnant of native vegetation on the Tweed Coast. It is of local, regional and state significance for its natural values, coastal landscapes and provision of significant habitat for native wildlife. Vegetation, ranges from coastal dunes to heath, swamp forests to rainforests, and the beautiful wetlands on Cudgen Lake and surrounding estuaries. Much of the reserve is listed as an Endangered Ecological Community (EEC), including swamp oak, swamp melaleuca forest, littoral and lowland subtropical rainforest, and freshwater wetlands.

It is home to plenty of birdlife, making it a great spot for bird watching. The lake and surrounding wetlands are a great place to see black swan and waterbirds like the Australian white ibis or the white-faced heron. You'll also see shorebirds including pied oystercatcher, osprey and sea eagles. So why not meet up with friends and family by the lake and enjoy the outdoors.



## WALK ON WATER BOARDWALK AND WALKING TRACK STARTS MINJUNGBAL ABORIGINAL CULTURAL CENTRE.

To get there:

- Turn onto Minjungbal Drive at South Tweed Heads from Pacific Highway
- Turn right into Kirkwood Road, near Tweed City Shopping Centre, then continue to the car park at the end of the road before it turns right into Davey Street.

Take this short walk and experience Aboriginal cultural heritage, sacred sites and beautiful natural scenery, with great birdwatching and photography opportunities.

This short 1 km loop walk invites you to see beautiful bushland and mangroves while experiencing the Aboriginal cultural heritage that makes this area so special.

Starting from Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre, you'll follow a wheelchair-accessible boardwalk and walking track through eucalypt forest, woodlands and swamp forests, before emerging among the diverse mangrove communities along Tweed River.

Read about the plants, animals, bush tucker and culture of the Minjungbal people from interpretive signage along the way. For a fascinating local perspective, why not take a guided tour from Minjungbal Aboriginal Cultural Centre?

See Bora Ring, a sacred Aboriginal site traditionally used for men's initiation ceremonies. Today, it continues to be an important place for Minjungbal people, providing a spiritual link with their ancestors.

This easy walk also offers great birdwatching opportunities. Keep your binoculars handy to see shorebirds and waders like the greater egret and royal spoonbill.

Because this is a mangrove area it is advisable to apply insect repellent.

# CHECK OUT YOUR OWN BACK YARD

**At Nature Explorers we are fortunate to have the Environmental Park in our 'backyard'. A short walk to the end of the road and we are surrounded by the wonders of the natural coastal bush.**

**Tarra from the Tweed Shire Council came to share her knowledge with both groups of children about how the flora and fauna co-exist. We learnt how to identify markings on the trees, how the claw marks of koalas and goannas differ. We explored through the mangrove swamp area and the paperbark forest spotting holes in the ground and in rotting tree trunks where various creatures might live.**

**A slow walk which involves lots of looking and wondering is a great opportunity for learning, not only for the children!**

**Open to the public the Environmental Park has many tracks that loop around. So whether you have an hour or a day, don't forget to check out what is on offer in Pottsville.**





# OUR BACK YARD

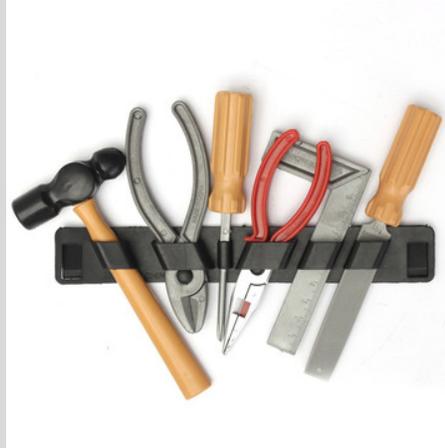




Documenting our own learning, is a learning experience in itself.



# Authentic experiences



**Empowering children to create can take many forms. One that we embrace with our Nature Explorers is encouraging them to use 'real' tools.**

**Children's imaginative play is meaningful to them, it is a way of building on what is familiar and extending that through exploration and sharing with peers. By providing real tools we are offering an opportunity for children's play to reflect and connect to the real world.**

**Where do you start? Children often enjoy creating with boxes, tubes and cardboard. Encourage them to take it to the next level, what could they build with small blocks of wood? With an idea in mind have a discussion about how they can achieve their goal. In particular how they can join things together.**

**Building a tool kit with your child can be an exciting experience, a few basic tools to start with is all you need. Shopping together as you explore tools gives your child an opportunity to get the feel of the items they need. Most large hardware stores are happy to give you a few off cuts of timber to start with.**

**As well as learning how to use the tools correctly and safely, children can also be encouraged to take care of them. Given this type of responsibility can give children a great sense of accomplishment and through encouraging responsibility, boost their self confidence.**





Children at work



## Building a shelter

