



Venue Benefit Risk Assessment – The Fox Guild

Activities:

- Little Foxes Nature Play Group
- Family Bush Club

Locations:

- You Yangs Regional Park, Lower Picnic Ground
- Buckley Falls Park, Fyansford

Types of activity:

Include but not limited to: Walking, running, exploring, walking in bare feet, playing with sticks, making and playing with mud, playing in the dirt, climbing on rocks, making pretend food, painting with mud, making potions out of found objects, loose parts play, exploration of local environment, bark rubbings, small tree climbing, teepee construction, playdough and paint messy play, crafting and other imaginative nature play activities.

Benefits of these activities:

Activity	Developmental Benefits
Music, Books and Goodbye songs on the mat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music is a great way to bring children together as a group. • Coming together for a short period on the mat encourages an awareness that we are here as a group. Saying hello and welcome/goodbye and thank you encourages a sense of belonging to the group. And whilst most of our little foxes are not at the developmental stage to play 'together', they will start to recognise each other as a member of the Little Foxes group. • The big mat is a central space for play and conversation for both big and little people. Little Foxes is a great social opportunity for parents and carers too. • Manipulating instruments, generally, is great for fine motor skills development. Different instruments require different grips to operate. And banging drums (for example) challenges the bigger arm muscles and shoulders necessary for stability (as in easel painting). • We finish each session with a short story. Because, well...books are good and reading is fun!
Theme activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating crafts like brushes, wands, caterpillars, bush creatures will require little people to hold an upright posture for a period of time. This will challenge the core muscles in the tummy and back.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are great activities for developing fine motor skills. They require manipulation of objects like leaves/twigs, beads, pipe cleaners and tape. • Exploring for goodies like leaves and twigs provides an orientation to our location for future adventuring and also an understanding of rules and boundaries. • Imaginative play opportunities are endless during the process of creating. The focus need not be on the end creation. • There will not be enough tools for everyone so social and sharing skills will be challenged. • Linking popular stories like Where is the Green Sheep and the Very Hungry Caterpillar encourages a love for books as well as exploration of characters and story lines. It can be used as a tool to encourage communication.
Mud play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With mud a child can create anything, they can let their imaginations run wild! Cakes, paint, coffee for mum, creatures. • Mud is a rich (though sometimes scary) sensory experience. It is slimy, it can be a bit prickly with stones and twigs, and it can be cold. • Using tools like shovels which create a deep pressure experience can help to make the tickly sensation of mud a little more bearable. • Talking to your child about what they are touching is a great way to develop speech and language skills. It exposes children to concepts like empty/full, cold/warm, heavy/light etc. • Exposure to mud apparently makes big people happy too! • Playing in mud encourages fine motor skill development. It requires tool manipulation, squishing mud balls strengthens little finger muscles. • It also demands a lot from core muscles as children hold different postures and carry heavy pots. • There will not be tools for everyone! So sharing and negotiation skills will be challenged • The benefits are endless, which is why mud play will be at every Little Foxes session! Grown-ups, try taking your shoes off and squelch your toes in the mud...it is very therapeutic... trust me!
Mud painting on a rock/tree/wooden easel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on a vertical surface requires arm/shoulder muscles to work against gravity. This helps develop shoulder and elbow stability. This is important for ultimately controlling the arm, then hand, then fingers.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working at an easel encourages midline crossing and bilateral coordination (using both hands together, using the non-dominant hand to stabilise).• Standing up encourages core strength, it gives the postural muscles a workout.• Working on a vertical surface is a fantastic and fun way for toddlers/pre-schoolers to develop the skills they will need for kinder/school. Both sitting at a desk and playing in the yard.• Because of the many developmental benefits the tree easel will be present at all Little Foxes groups.
Playdough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play-dough, like mud, is a Little Foxes favourite because of the many developmental benefits it provides.• It offers a rich sensory experience, it can be goeey and some children may avoid it initially.• Hiding objects in play-dough is a great way to challenge planning and problem solving skills. It challenges a sense of touch to ‘feel out’ the object and the visual sense to see! Little hands need to pince and pull and manipulate the play-dough to find the object.• Play-dough allows for open ended imaginative play. There is no goal, no finished product.• Play-dough also provides opportunity for the use of scissors and other tools. It is a great way for toddlers to learn to use scissors.• Little Foxes uses plastic toddler scissors which are not sharp at all! But they are a fantastic way to introduce little hands to the use of this tool.
Lotions and potions and potting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a great activity for developing communication skills whilst discussing the sensory properties of the herbs. ‘Do you like this smell?’, ‘what colour is this flower?’ are some questions you can ask your little person.• For our little Little Foxes exploration of the herbs may be through touch and taste!• It challenges the little scientist inside all children. What happens if I mix lavender and mint?• And what toddler doesn’t want to copy what they see mum doing in the kitchen. Mixing lots of green stuff in pots to make something that might smell like dinner (eg rosemary = roast lamb!!) Or making a nice smelling perfume.• Potting explores the concept of growing our own plants. This encourages an awareness of how plants grow, what is needed for plants to grow (eg soil, water, sun) and where our food comes from.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potting requires fine motor manipulation of mud and little pots. Or spades and larger pots. • It requires carrying heavier items, like watering cans, working those bigger muscles.
Little fingers zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each week we will have a mat set up with fine motor activities like chalk boards and drawing. • Little people may want to give their big muscles a rest for a few minutes during the session and this is a great option (along with quiet reading on the big mat) • Lying down on a mat provides great deep pressure to a large area of the body which may help to calm the nervous system. • Drawing activities on a mat is a great way to encourage tummy time. Tummy time is important for all ages. And for toddlers they can support a 'prone on elbows' position which is lying on tummy with head/shoulder propped up on elbows. This position is great for developing back and neck muscles. It is also a great way to stabilise the shoulder area to help with arm and hand control.
Baby zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our little Little Foxes are encouraged to participate in all the activities as they (and their big people) are able. Make use of your session facilitator and the other parents/carers as additional hands/eyes if you have an older sibling as well as a little baby. • We will have a sensory box set up on a small mat with bits and bobs from the activities. This may be a good opportunity for tummy time and sensory exploration.

Hazard Identification and Assessment:

Potential Hazard	Precautions/Control Measures	Who/when	Risk assessment after precautions
Snakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform children and carers that snakes live in this environment. • Encourage carers to keep in close contact with children at all times. • Inform children and carers to not approach a snake, to just stand still, remain calm and wait until the snake moves out of the way. 	Facilitator, children and carers. Ongoing	Moderate
Roads within 20-100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform carers that there is a near of the area we are exploring. • The group will be encouraged to explore on the non-road area of the space. 	Facilitator, children and carers. Ongoing	Low



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Cars driving into the carpark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is possible at any stage, so we will make sure the group is advised to explore in the non-carpark area. 	Facilitator, children and carers, Ongoing	Low
Child wandering off into the Bush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst there is plenty of clear space in our Playgroup area, we are part of the larger green spaces and there is a lot of space to wander off. Carers will be advised to keep their own children within their sight (and vice versa!). Facilitator will provide an extra pair of eyes. 	Facilitator, children and carers, Ongoing	Low
Bushfire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facilitator will check the current warnings for the sites each week. We will follow the advice of the Victorian Government and CFA http://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/. On a day of code red, extreme or severe fire danger, the session will not be held. 	Vic Government, Facilitator and carers, Bushfire Season	Low
Other weather elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sun – keep hydrated, wear sunscreen and protective clothing, seek shelter Rain – wear appropriate clothing, seek shelter if the rain is too strong Storms – wear appropriate clothing. Seek shelter as appropriate and leave the area if the risk is deemed too high by facilitator and/or carers Extreme cold – wear appropriate clothing. Weather is unlikely to be so cold that it would prevent playgroup from continuing. 	Facilitator and carers, Ongoing	Low
Insects and arachnids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform children and their carers to keep an eye out for insects and spiders. If discovered, then they can be viewed and understood. Children will be informed that they should refrain from touching spiders or insects that they find, unless they are considered to be safe. 	Facilitator, children and carers, Ongoing	Low
Rocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are some large rocks in the area that may be climbed upon by children. We can discuss the considerations to make when climbing these rocks, ie slippery, sharp, fall risk from the top and sides. 	Facilitator, children and carers, Ongoing	Low
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Fyansford location is a short walk from the Barwon River. Carers will be reminded to both stay with their child at all times, speak with their child about water safety & asked to keep an eye on their child/ren at all times, as well as keep an eye out for wandering children. 	Facilitator, children and carers, Ongoing	Low
Falling tree branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The facilitator will survey the area before each session and assess whether there is an immediate risk of falling tree branches (particularly after a storm & hot still days). The Parks Authority, or Geelong Council will be informed if there is any suspicion of risk. 	Facilitator, children and carers, Ongoing	Moderate



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Sticks/leaves/dirt and ground cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform children/carers of the hazard to allow self-evaluation Remove where appropriate 	Facilitator, children and carers, Ongoing	Moderate
Dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All areas are dogs on leash areas. Unfortunately, owners do not always follow the rules, so we will come into contact occasionally with an off lead dog. Carers are encouraged to educate their children on general dog safety ie don't approach or pat an unknown animal. 	Facilitator, children and carers ongoing	Moderate
Broken glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There will be rubbish including broken glass at all sites. The facilitator will clear the playgroup area of potentially dangerous rubbish. ☐ Unfortunately, at the You Yangs due to the amount of glass it is not possible to clear the area entirely. The facilitator will discuss this with parents/carers and will have a trolley/bucket/bag for pieces of glass to be deposited into. 	Facilitator, children and carers, ongoing	Moderate

Notes: Review assessment 1. Annually, 2. After an incident, 3. After a major change to the local environment, 4. After a change in location. Monitor effectiveness of control measures and adjust accordingly. Facilitator and Carers sign understanding of assessment via the contact details form.