

The WEE NIPPERS Years

A monthly column about learning for parents and caregivers of pre-schoolers.

Little Scientists

By Teresa Pleace
(MEd, DipLdg, DipMgt)
Centre Manager
Wee Nippers Mosgiel



What's a cloud made of? Why are the plants different colours? Where do the bees go? Why does the weather change so often?

Anyone who has spent even a short amount of time with children recognises the natural curiosity that children of all ages have for their environment. They need to touch, taste, bend, poke and mostly find ways to manipulate what they see. Their natural curiosity is a child's way of learning about their world. Children are fascinated by running water, puddles, insects, birds and animals.

To see, feel, smell, taste and **hear** are opportunities that help make connections between the natural world and the world in which children live. It engages them in rich discovery and an excitement for learning.

Children chasing a butterfly might be the stimulus for a dance or a discussion about pollination. Feeling wriggling creatures and not being too preoccupied with order and cleanliness helps children feel they are allowed to 'investigate', explore, test the boundaries. We then start to tune into our 'little scientists' as they learn about cause and effect.

Gardening with children at Wee Nippers involves the children planning the garden, selecting the seeds and plants and tending to the garden on a daily basis. The way we go about helping children learn and explore has a great impact on how quickly they learn, how much they retain and the memories associated with the experience. Children develop skills in using tools, recognising plant growth and enjoyment in watching the insects that visit the garden.

I love this old saying:
Tell me, I forget
Show me, I remember
Involve me, I understand.

When children are allowed to explore and repeat their explorations, whether it be blowing bubbles, mixing mud and water, or tasting ice, they develop a wealth of language and a huge sense of accomplishment. Repeating learning helps children construct their understandings to know why and how things work and make sense of life.

With the right environments and opportunities, children can become expert problem-solvers, explorers and investigators. It's our role as adults to notice, recognise and respond to those everyday scientific moments.

Next month: Skills for the 21st Century

WEE NIPPERS

Early Childhood Centre

Pre-enrolment visits welcome

0508 WEE NIPS

(0508 933 6477)

1 Ayreshire Drive (off Factory Rd),
Mosgiel