

BEYOND THE 4 WALLS



knowledge rooted  
in experience

**Our mission is to foster rich learning experiences, ecological literacy, and healthy living by connecting children to nature through the use of the Nature School model in the early, primary & secondary years of school.**

**Our vision is for all Kiwi kids to play and learn in Known areas such as Day care centres local Bush, creeks, meadows, farm grasses, mountains, and shorelines with a wise and skilled educator who understands the power of play and child-directed learning. With an over arching goal of how to contribute to a more sustainable world.**

At Craftlab Nature School the emphasis is on outdoor learning. Whilst children are attending they will spend a large portion of their time outside, whatever the weather. There are many benefits to being outside, both physically and mentally. The outdoor environment offers unique opportunities for children to develop their gross and fine motor skills. By being outside, deep and meaningful connections are made to the natural environment. Ample blocks of time to engage with nature allow for quiet contemplation, as well as physical and group activities that develop social and emotional literacy. Traditional curriculum areas such as literacy, arts, numeracy and science are readily learned in a meaningful context.





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Whether indoors or out, activities at Craftlab Nature School are project-based, which allows for in-depth learning. Children are encouraged to “look closely”, developing critical thinking skills that will be the foundation of their learning throughout their later schooling years.

As the programs at Craftlab Nature School are based on the principles of emergent learning, the curriculum is ever changing and flexible. However, the outdoor world often creates curiosity around the following topics:

- \*Gardening and farming
- \*Natural materials for creative expression
- \*Animals, habitats & life cycles
- \*The elements (air, earth, fire, & water)
- \*Conservation & environmental awareness
- \*Trees, plants and edible wilds
- \*The seasons and life cycles
- \*Social history
- \*Living off the land and survival skills

These topics may be explored in partnership with other user groups of local Reserves and the community or provided as a onsite program. Subjects of interest are often explored in groups, so that children have multiple opportunities to engage in a collaborative and social setting.

At Craftlab Nature School, we value the participation of parents and other family members. Parents benefit from being actively involved in their child’s education, creating a strong connection between home and school. As well, we can host an evening meeting that is open to all Craftlab Nature School parents. These meetings are an opportunity to share and discuss documentation of the children’s learning; read and review articles; or periodically welcome guest speakers to present on a variety of topics relating to young children and their education.





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Subjects of interest are often explored in groups, so that children have multiple opportunities to engage in a collaborative and social setting. The ability to work with others, as well as independently, is a vital component of early learning.

The curriculum of Craftlab Nature school is structured around the Enviroschools kit visions & Values & New Zealand school curriculum and learning outcomes & values.

Our vision is for young people:

- who will be creative, energetic, and enterprising
- who will seize the opportunities offered by new knowledge and technologies to secure a sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental future for our country
- who will work to create an Aotearoa, New Zealand in which Māori and Pākehā recognise each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring
- who, in their school years, will continue to develop the values, knowledge, and competencies that will enable them to live full and satisfying lives
- who will be confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners. ( NZSC 2015 <http://www.edgazette.govt.nz/Articles/Article.aspx?ArticleId=7611>)



*The New Zealand* **Curriculum**





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deep understanding of nature  
and environmental sustainability

**Confident**

- Positive in their own identity
- Motivated and reliable
- Resourceful
- Enterprising and entrepreneurial
- Resilient

**Connected**

- Able to relate well to others
- Effective users of communication tools
- Connected to the land and environment
- Members of communities
- International citizens

**Actively involved**

- Participants in a range of life contexts
- Contributors to the well-being of New Zealand – social, cultural, economic, and environmental.

**Lifelong learners**

- Literate and numerate
- Critical and creative thinkers
- Active seekers, users, and creators of knowledge
- Informed decision makers





## BEYOND THE 4 WALLS



creativity and imaginative  
problem solving

Explore, prepare food, garden, build shelters and spend time in out in nature. Each jam packed session includes a snack that the children help prepare. The children get to explore the natural world, garden and play & learn together.



*\*Children learning how to recognise plants.*

*\*Getting ready for shelter building.*

*\*Preparing to plant by turning the soil and weeding*



*\*Learning how to identify herbs & Clipping rosemary to bring home.*

*\*Outdoor blocks allow for unstructured, creative play that creates opportunities for team.*

*\*Beginning our session with a gathering circle allows everyone a chance to re-connect and share ideas.*





BEYOND THE 4 WALLS

healthy attitudes  
and behaviours

## Guiding Principles

Central to our philosophy is the belief that children are inherently intelligent and interested in the world around them. Through careful observation, reflection, and documentation educators and parents can support children to express their ideas and theories in a multitude of ways.

At Craftlab Nature School, the following ‘big ideas’ are foundational for our learning together:

- we employ a place-based approach to education that promotes respect for the environment known to the children. This teaches ecological literacy, and develops environmental stewardship Kaitiakitanga means guardianship and protection. It is a way of managing the environment, based on the Māori world view. A kaitiaki is a guardian. ; we re-visit our ‘places’ and come to know them intimately, thereby nurturing an empathy for our corner of the Earth.
- we practice a play-based approach to facilitate learning opportunities for the children; we offer children ample time and opportunity to stretch their imaginations, to climb trees, explore, mentor each other, problem-solve, and develop their social competency.

