

## CONSCIOUS KIDS ONE DAY PROGRAMME

Children growing up in New Zealand are blessed with a wide variety of natural spaces to play in. Unfortunately, their time spent playing in nature has decreased significantly from when their parents were growing up. Many children entering school have missed out on opportunities for unstructured play in natural environments, but their need for physical challenges, risk-taking, and connection with the natural environment remains strong.

Conscious Kids has developed an exciting 100% nature based programme that gets Kiwi kids outside, developing social competence in mixed aged groups, self-confidence in their problem-solving abilities, and awareness and sensitivity to the environment. These include full day school holiday programmes and after school programmes. We are also proud to offer a One Day Programme for those children that could benefit from 1 day a week spent outside of the classroom.

**Conscious Kids One Day Programme** is an environmental education programme where students actively engage in hands-on learning in nature. With experienced educators, mixed-aged groups, and a low 1:8 teacher/student ratio, students develop the resilience, self-control, and social competence needed to be successful in the classroom.

***"Teaching children about the natural world should be seen as the most important events in their lives." Thomas Berry***

Children will have the opportunity to make their own choices and follow their own interests and curiosities within a framework of respect for those around them and the environment. Our educators observe the children closely, document their learning through photos and stories, and extend their thinking through authentic conversation, the provision of resources, and offering of skill building workshops in areas such as marine biology, fishing, shelter building, or fire starting. At Conscious Kids we recognise the environment as the '3<sup>rd</sup> teacher', and as the children experience nature throughout the seasons, they are gifted with innumerable opportunities for memorable, authentic learning.

Providing opportunity to learn in a mixed-age setting is another key aspect of our programmes. Children learn best by observing and interacting with others who are older and younger than they are. Benefits for younger children include opportunities to engage in and learn from activities that would be too difficult for them to do alone, learning from and being inspired by older children, and receiving care and emotional support. Benefits for older children include opportunities to practice and develop their nurturing and leadership skill and capacities, and to extend their own learning through teaching others. Age mixing also works as an anti-dote to competitiveness and bullying.<sup>1</sup>

Conscious Kids is based on Forest Schooling, this is becoming recognised and hugely popular throughout the world. Research shows us that children are missing out on opportunities to play the way generations before them have. Children are lacking social skills, the ability to solve their own problems and have increased levels of anxiety, simply from missing out on the opportunity to play.

***'Giving your child extended periods of uninterrupted, child-directed play in nature, reduces your child's anxiety. Nature is healing.'** Angela Hanscome*

At the One Day Programme children will gain:

- **Problem Solving Skills**
- **Social Skills**
- **Respect for the Environment**
- **Knowledge about the Environment**
- **Increased Creativity**
- **Healthier bodies**
- **Mindfulness**
- **Confidence to take risks**

We are not required to register through MOE as we are not a school. We are a small business running a programme for kids, there is a similar programme like ours in Auckland running a Forest School in Orewa. We are happy to provide our health and safety, risk assessment, and insurance policies upon request, and you are more than welcome to come observe one of our sessions in action, please let us know if you would like to arrange a visit.

The Ministry have advised us that our programme falls under the New Zealand Education Act section 25B Release from school: *The principal of a State school may, if satisfied that a student will receive outside the school tuition acceptable to the principal, release the student from attendance at the school, for a period or periods agreed with a parent of that student, to receive the tuition.* In regards to marking students absent or present the school will determine how to proceed. Legally children are only allowed 5 absent school days a year. You may decide to mark 'explained absence'. You may choose to use the same protocol as when students go overseas for a holiday, or attend a gifted and talented programme once a week.

Our vision is **"Little Seeds for a Better Future"** as we believe that children who spend time free- playing in nature will develop the skills and attributes needed to be successful in their school years, and beyond. The New Zealand Curriculum sets out a vision for young people to be "confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners," and "connected to the land and environment." We are pleased to work alongside our NZ schools to grow the learners of the future. Please visit our website or get in touch for more information, we would love to hear from you. <http://www.consciouskids.co.nz>

Conscious Kids New Zealand – [www.consciouskids.co.nz](http://www.consciouskids.co.nz) – [info@consciouskids.co.nz](mailto:info@consciouskids.co.nz)

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<sup>i</sup> Gray, Peter, *Free to Learn*, Basic Books, 2017