



“THE NATURE TABLE”

Set up a permanent place for a classroom **NATURE** display table:

Integrate discovery in every day nature table discussion. These are opportunities for every child to participate in the story telling of their collection. Stories often come from family discussions which are wonderful “teachable moments”. **The Nature Table** will promote an understanding of diversity as the weird and wonderful begin to take significant places in view of the class. Encourage children’s curiosity to flourish which will develop “finding out” skills (research), language (include scientific), speaking and presentation skills, respecting the speaker, taking turns, listening, sharing stories, thinking of questions to ask, respecting knowledge, who knows what, connecting family stories. Listening in these group learning sessions is an opportunity to prepare students to recognize their still sitting skills before they practice in the outdoors. **The Nature Table** creates opportunity for students to engage in tangible experiences – bringing nature indoors for every child.

Creating a Nature Table

- Items of nature are everywhere, [but there are some rules:](#)
 - respect the habitats of all species
 - seek permission before collecting from another persons property
 - ensure your health and safety
 - collection bans exist in National Parks and State Forests
 - Keep it simple, you’ll be amazed at what children and their families find to put on the nature table and share with their fellow students.
- This ongoing activity confronts the destructive notion of ‘Biophobia’ by providing a safe discovery experience and motivating every child to find and bring something into the class.
- It ignites curiosity and through discussion, develops knowledge of place and initiates the research processes - the more we know, the more we know we don’t know!
- This activity will engage knowledgeable family and community members to share what they know about things bought in by children. Expand children’s learning through intercultural exchange. Everyone has a nature story.
- It enables every student to have their collection and knowledge recognized and valued by their peers.
- This activity creates opportunity for hands on parent/community participation in maintaining an interesting and diverse display area. Roster families/parents/ students or helpers on for this job.

Nature Table Structure

Use a low (small child mid waist height) bench/board and cover with interesting coloured / textured cloth. Use small box’s to create different elevations, create hidey-holes for special items, add a living terrarium or fairy garden, children’s dioramas. Encourage students to bring things from nature in as they find them - from the playground, from home, from grandparent’s, from family history, from holidays and camping, walks in parks, the beach. Link literacy to identification and labelling of objects. Consider appropriate [QLD Museum loans](#) as additions. Each item will have additional knowledge opportunities eg a rock – what kind of rock, how was the rock created, where was it made, how did it get to our place, does it crumble, is it hard, what will it become, how do we use it..... questions about nature are endless.....