



Embedding Aboriginal perspectives into your National Tree Day event for Early Years Educators

With National Tree Day coming up, there's no better time than now to make your event a 'deadly' one (in a good way, we promise).

Teaching Aboriginal perspectives should form a crucial part of your National Tree Day event, as caring for Country and sustainable land practices has been a part of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia from the start of time here.

Fortunately, Planet Ark has teamed up with us at Deadly Ed to ensure all teachers and educators have the confidence, knowledge and resources to include Aboriginal perspectives across their National Tree Day initiatives.

Follow the steps as outlined below, we have sorted these activities into what to do before, during and after your National Tree Day event to ensure you and all your students have a deadly learning experience!

DEADLY (definition)

In our mob, deadly doesn't mean dangerous. It means everything good, awesome, and wicked.

Here are some of our tips to incorporate in your centre in the lead up to National Tree Day

1. Introduce [yarning circles](#) to your centre
2. Download our [Native garden starter kit activity](#) to teach your students about how First Nations cultures categorise native plants into these uses. Get them outside to find what native plants you may already have in your school and what categorise they might fit into
3. Think about inviting your local Aboriginal community in for your National Tree Day event. See [this guide for respectfully communicating with Elders](#).

Embedding Aboriginal perspectives into your National Tree Day event

for Early Years Educators

EYLF OUTCOME 1 CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Teaching and Learning Activities

Engage the children in a meaningful and educational activity by taking them for a walk around the outside area. As you explore the natural elements such as the land, sky, and waterways, encourage the children to observe and discuss their observations. This will not only help them develop a deeper appreciation for the environment but also provide an opportunity to acknowledge the significance of these elements in Aboriginal culture.

Create a yarning circle, a traditional Aboriginal way of sharing stories and knowledge, to explain to the children the rich history of Aboriginal People in Australia. Emphasise that for thousands of years, Aboriginal People have lived on the land that we now call Australia. By acknowledging the Country, we show respect for their heritage and culture, as well as recognise the ongoing relationship between the traditional owners and the land.

To help the children understand the concept of Acknowledgment of Country, use a relatable analogy. Explain that it's similar to being a guest at a birthday party, where you would say thank you for inviting me. Just as we show gratitude for being welcomed into someone's home, Acknowledgment of Country is a way of expressing gratitude for being allowed to live and learn on Aboriginal land. This activity not only fosters a sense of respect and appreciation for Aboriginal culture but also helps the children understand the importance of sharing and valuing diverse cultures.

Resources required for below activity:

- AIATSI Map

Utilise the AIATSI Map, which stands for Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, to locate the specific Aboriginal land that your centre is situated on. This interactive map provides a visual representation of the diverse Aboriginal nations and language groups across Australia. By identifying the traditional owners of the land, the children will gain a deeper understanding of the connection between Aboriginal People and the specific area they are in. This activity promotes cultural awareness and encourages the children to develop a sense of place and belonging within the broader Australian landscape.

EYLF OUTCOME 1 (CONTINUED)
CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Teaching and Learning Activities

Resources required for below activity:

- [Red River Gum colouring sheet](#)

Yarn with the children about how the Red River Gums hold immense cultural significance as they serve as a vital resource for the Aboriginal community, offering them shelter, materials, food, and medicine. These majestic trees not only provide a safe haven for Aboriginal Peoples but also offer them the necessary materials for crafting tools, weapons, and shelters. The river red gums bear fruits and nuts that serve as a valuable food source, sustaining the Aboriginal people for generations. Additionally, the bark and leaves of these trees possess medicinal properties, allowing the indigenous community to treat various ailments and maintain their well-being. The river red gums truly embody the deep connection between the Aboriginal people and their environment, playing a crucial role in their cultural practices and daily lives.

Further extend with a colouring in session using the print out of the Red River Gum Flower.

EYLF OUTCOME 2
CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

Teaching and Learning Activities

Engage the children in a meaningful connection with the land by bringing them outside to a serene area in your daycare, such as a garden or a designated yarning circle. Encourage the children to sit in a yarning circle and place their hands on the earth, fostering a physical connection to the land beneath them. Take this opportunity to observe the natural environment around you, prompting discussions about the various types of plants that are visible. Emphasise the interconnectedness of all elements in the environment, highlighting the integral role that Aboriginal People play in caring for the land. By instilling a sense of responsibility towards Country, children can develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

Discuss that the Aboriginal Peoples have a deep-rooted connection to the land and waters of Australia, which is fundamental to their culture and way of life. This connection is based on their belief that the land and people were created by ancestor beings, and they continue to care for and protect the environment. Everything within the landscape, from water to animals, is considered part of the land, and Aboriginal Peoples view themselves as intertwined with these elements. As a result, they have a strong sense of responsibility to preserve and sustainably manage their environment for future generations.

EYLF OUTCOME 2 (CONTINUED)
CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

Teaching and Learning Activities

Resources required for below activity:

- Native seeds
- Paper towel
- Spray bottle
- Clear containers
- Soil

Prepare for a hands-on planting activity that will allow the children to actively participate in Caring for Country. Gather the necessary materials such as native seeds, clear containers, paper towels, and a spray bottle of water.

Demonstrate the process of planting seeds by placing them on paper towels in plastic cups near a window. Ensure that the seeds are kept moist by misting them daily with water, avoiding over-saturation to prevent Mould growth. Once the seeds have sprouted, involve the children in transferring them to soil-filled plastic cups, allowing them to witness the roots growing.

Guide the children in filling the cups with soil, grasp the soil and open and close their hands. Encourage children to pick up handfuls of the soil and squeeze it in their hands. Create a hole with one finger for the seed and planting it carefully. Encourage the children to wear gloves and remind them not to touch their faces during the activity to ensure safety and hygiene. This hands-on experience will deepen the children's connection with the land and foster a sense of responsibility towards caring for the environment

EYLF OUTCOME 3:
CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

Teaching and Learning Activities

Through a yarnning circle yarn to the children about how Aboriginal People have been using Australian Native plants for a variety of purposes for thousands of years. These plants have been essential for their food, medicine, tools, weapons, utensils, ceremonies, hunting, and everyday life. Aboriginal People have a deep connection to the land and have learned to utilize the resources around them in sustainable and meaningful ways. By understanding the importance of these plants, we can appreciate the rich cultural heritage and knowledge that has been passed down through generations.

**EYLF OUTCOME 3 (CONTINUED):
CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING**

Teaching and Learning Activities

Resources required for below activity:

- Images of: Tea Tree (*Leptospermum*), Soap Tree/Wattle (*Acacia Longifolia*), Lemon Myrtle and Bottle Brush

Using images of the four listed Native trees, exploring the flowers, bark and leaves, talk about each of the plants and Aboriginal uses.

Tea Tree

Aboriginal People would heat the leaves and inhale the vapours to alleviate coughs and colds. Additionally, they would create a warm and wet mass from the leaves to treat wounds and infections topically.

Soap Tree/Wattle

The soap tree has been a valuable resource for Aboriginal communities, offering various medicinal applications to maintain health and well-being over generations.

In addition to creating a soapy lather for bathing, the soap tree's bark and root were utilized to make healing infusions that could alleviate muscle pain and toothaches among First Peoples. Furthermore, Indigenous groups have traditionally used soap tree leaves, berries, and bark to address a range of health issues such as headaches, colds, stomach upsets, snake bites, eye sores, wounds, cuts, and diarrhoea.

Lemon Myrtle

The Lemon Myrtle is always regarded as a medicine tree, as it can help with blocked noses, sore throats and head colds by crushing the leaves and inhaling or adding the leaves to water and drinking like a tea. We often see the lemon myrtle used in food and beverage recipes now, as it gives a very unique lemon flavour. One of our favourites is Lemon Myrtle cookies

Bottle Brush

The Bottle Brush Tree holds a special place in Aboriginal culture, from providing food and medicine to being utilized in crafting tools. Its leaves and bark were brewed into a tea to alleviate colds and coughs, while its flowers were used to create a sweet beverage for special occasions. The sturdy wood of the tree was fashioned into tools like spears and digging sticks, and even musical instruments like the didgeridoo.

Resources required for below activity:

- [Play School: The wonder of native plants - ABC Kids](#)

Watch the 2min video starring Clarence Slockee (from the ABC's Gardening Australia) brings in Australian native seed pods to explore in the Green Team HQ.

**EYLF OUTCOME 4:
CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS**

Teaching and Learning Activities

Resources required for below activity:

- Leaves
- Wood round (tree cookie)
- Bucket sand
- Nuts and seeds
- Tree branches
- Basket
- Magnifying glass

In preparation for National Tree Day, it is essential to provide children with opportunities to explore and become familiar with the abundant natural resources found in their local environment. By doing so, we can foster a stronger connection between children and the land they inhabit. To facilitate this, consider setting up a temporary activity station in your classroom that can be enjoyed for weeks to come.

Enhance the activity station by displaying some large branches on a table. These branches can serve as tangible examples of the different parts of a tree, such as the trunk, branches, and twigs. By observing and touching these branches, children can develop a deeper understanding of the structure and texture of trees. For added interest, consider propping a tree branch in a bucket of sand in a corner of the room, creating a mini natural display that mimics the environment in which trees grow.

Lastly, involve the children in collecting natural resources such as leaves, sticks, flowers, and seeds. These items can be placed in a basket and prominently displayed on the table.

By including the children in this process, you not only encourage their active participation but also provide them with a hands-on experience of gathering and appreciating the natural treasures found in their surroundings. For an added element of discovery, consider providing a magnifying glass, allowing children to examine these resources more closely and discover the intricate details they may have otherwise missed.

Resources required for below activity:

- A spool of string (like jute, hemp, cotton, or nylon)
- A pair of scissors for cutting the string into even pieces
- A large surface for winding the rope onto (e.g., a tabletop or floor)
- Something to use as a weight (e.g., heavy books)

**EYLF OUTCOME 4 (CONTINUED):
CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS**

Teaching and Learning Activities

Gather the children in a yarnning circle and explain that for thousands and thousands of years Aboriginal People would use natural materials to create items and objects for use in everyday life. These natural materials are skillfully intertwined to form intricate patterns, resulting in the creation of objects such as baskets, bowls, rope, and nets. Each creation holds immense significance, serving as a tangible link between the weaver, their ancestral heritage, and the land they inhabit. The process of weaving commences with the gathering and meticulous preparation of local resources, including reeds, bark, and various plants. Explain to the children that we are going to attempt to make our own rope either using jute or natural fibres that can be found in the environment.

Instructions:

1. Start by dividing the string into equal parts. Make sure that all the pieces have the same thickness and length. Keep in mind that if you want a thick rope, you will need more strings, but if you want a thinner rope, begin with around six pieces. Also, when cutting the strings to the desired length, remember that the rope will end up shorter after twisting. So, cut the strings a few inches longer than your desired rope length to compensate for this.
2. Place the strings flat and assisting the children secure them with a knot, making sure both ends are equal in length. This will serve as the midpoint of your rope, which you can then start twisting around.
3. Have the child take one end of the string and begin twisting it around the knot. Make sure to weave in a consistent direction, as this will make your rope stronger and more even. As you twist, the strings will begin to bind together and form a stronger rope. Alternatively, as you twist, you can place weight on the rope, such as heavy books or a metal clamp.
4. Once the rope is coiled, tie the ends together in a tight knot. You can also use a thin wire or dental floss for extra strength.

Once you've completed your National Tree Day and all these deadly activities, be sure to check out our [Early Years offerings](#) and have the Deadly Ed team come out to your centre and get every student learning more about our Aboriginal cultures!

For more on National Tree Day, follow Planet Ark on Instagram & Facebook:
IG: [@NationalTreeDay](#) / [@PlanetArk](#)
FB: [/NationalTreeDay](#) / [planetark](#)