

Green time over screen time

I enjoyed hunting for 'treasure' in the wood bark with Delilah, Elise, Johanna and Leo one morning. They were all engaged looking for seeds, bits of sparkly paper, or coloured beads, fallen among the bark. At one point Leo didn't have any treasure yet, so Elise pointed out to him a bit of blue sparkly paper that she had seen. It was such a simple game, yet each child was engrossed in their exploration. It reminded me of a poem I read in "The sacred urge to play", by Pennie Brownlee.

No! I'm not playing

*I'm not rolling or crawling, or hopping or drawing,
Or skipping and running around,
I'm not jumping or hiking, or climbing or biking,
I'm sitting, not making a sound.*

*I'm not stalking a sparrow, or firing an arrow,
Or planting out seedling and peas,
I'm not tracking a fox, or remodeling a box
Into a ship for me.*

*I'm not planning a trip for my box sailing ship,
Or building a hut in a tree,
I'm not whittling or knitting, or baking or swimming,
I'm lying here watching TV.*

Much of my study this year has been focused on outdoor play, and the value it has in growing children's brains. TV, ipads or computer games do not grow children's brains. Children learn through doing stuff, and outdoors in the best place to do that. Albert Schweitzer said, "Adults teach children in three important ways: the first is by example, the second is by example, the third is by example". The children love being outside at Small is Beautiful, and their brains are doing all that important social, emotional and physical learning while they play. Play is children's work. So enjoy getting outside with your children, play with them, and set the example to set them up for a life of learning.

Tracy