

## The 'Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto' States:

Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.... such learning often makes "the most memorable learning experiences" This helps us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. These feelings stay with us into adulthood and affect our behaviour, lifestyle and work. They influence not only our values but also the decisions we make.



## Educational Benefits

- Improve academic achievement
- Provide a bridge to higher order learning
- Develop skills and independence in a widening range of environments
- Make learning more engaging and relevant to young people
- Develop active citizens and stewards of the environment
- Nurture creativity
- Provide opportunities for informal learning through play
- Reduce behaviour problems and improve attendance
- Stimulate, inspire and improve motivation
- Develop the ability to deal with uncertainty
- Provide challenge and the opportunity to take acceptable levels of risk
- Improve young people's attitudes to learning



[www.inter-nature.co.uk](http://www.inter-nature.co.uk)

'Connecting with Nature'

email - [info@inter-nature.co.uk](mailto:info@inter-nature.co.uk)

Mell Harrison & Chris Hunt



# Forest School



with

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'Connecting with Nature'

## What is a Forest School?

Forest School began in Scandinavia and is based on children learning through their own play based experience of the outdoor environment.

Forest School is a long-term sustainable approach to outdoor learning. It builds self esteem and independence in children and young people through their experience in the exploration of our natural world.

The philosophy of Forest School is to encourage and inspire children by giving them the time and space to explore, to develop skills and to gain confidence through practical 'hands-on' experiences. It's about being in a special place and re-visiting that special place on a regular basis.

## What should children wear?

It is important that we wear clothes for play that you don't mind getting dirty! It is also important to wear suitable clothing for the weather.

Wet Weather - Waterproof Jacket, Trousers and Wellies

Sunny Weather - Sun hat and Sun Cream

## Health and Safety

Risk assessments are reviewed termly and assessed on the day of each session. There is always a first aider with kit on site.

## What do we do in a Forest School Session?

Everything we do is child centred and child initiated but most importantly child led!

We take our inspiration from nature to explore and discover. We make things with natural materials. We sit on logs, talk and tell stories. We build dens and shelters. We drag, roll, balance, play, swing, climb, count, hide, and find to work things out. We achieve!

From this grows a sense of admiration, respect and love for the outdoor environment, which then develops into a deeper 'Connection with Nature'.

## What are the benefits for the children?

- Self Awareness
- Co-Operation
- Building of Self-Esteem and Confidence
- Motivation
- Decision Making
- Problem Solving
- Empathy
- Social Communication Skills - Speaking and Listening
- Independence
- Sharing
- Risk Taking
- Fun!

Children today spend less time outside than any of our previous generations.

We aim to give them their time back!

## Benefits of children being outdoors

There are countless pieces of international research that highlight the importance of children spending time in natural outdoor spaces.

### Physical health benefits

Increased gross motor movement. Increased oxygen levels improves brain function. Sunlight increases vitamin D production which leads to increased resilience to illness.

### Mental health benefits

Spending time in green spaces reduces levels of cortisol (a stress chemical) in the brain and therefore has a calming influence. This increases receptivity for building neural pathways which improves learning.

### Social benefits

When playing outside, communication, teambuilding and language skills are developed.

### Risk awareness

Playing outside allows children to learn about risk assessment and risk taking. Children that are exposed to acceptable levels of risk at a young age are less likely to make bad judgements in the future.

### Behaviour

Due to the calming effect on the brain and the increase in physical space outside, improved behaviour is often observed.