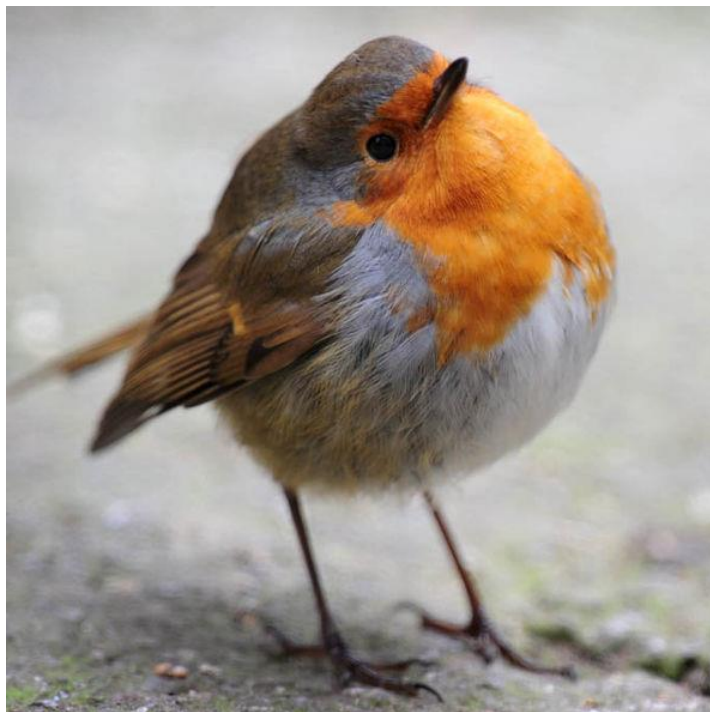
A photograph of a forest with tall, thin trees and a ground covered in moss and fallen leaves. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating long shadows on the forest floor.

“An inspirational process that offers children regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence through hands-on learning in a woodland environment” O’Brien & Murray (2008)

Forest School



Hmmmm... so where does Forest School originate?

Forest School was developed in Scandinavia in the 1950's

It originated as an Early Years Education

In 1993, a group of nursery nurses from Bridgwater College, Somerset went to visit a Forest School in Denmark. Upon their return, after being inspired by the open-air culture, ethos and approach of what they had observed, they decided to set up and develop their own Forest School.

By 1995 the college developed courses for the practice to be taught to others. A level 3 course was established and became the standard qualification for practitioners to be able to run Forest Schools in their setting.



The 6 Principles of Forest School

Principle 1: Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of FS.

Principle 2: Forest School takes place in a woodland/natural environment to support the development of a relationship between learner and natural world.

Principle 3: Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all children, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

Principle 5: Forest School is run by qualified Forest School Practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practise.

Principle 4: Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

Principle 6: Forest School uses a range of learner-centered processes to create a community for development and learning.





Why do Forest School?

- To provide an environment to respond to children's learning needs. Practical/child-led
- To nurture self-esteem
- To promote healthy lifestyles being outdoors in all weathers
- To develop confidence, communication and social skills
- To make school fun, enjoyable, exciting and memorable
- To raise standards of attainment
- To develop children's ability to risk assess and self-regulation.

All of these will help the children to be more independent and will give the children vital skills as they go through life.

Risk
Assessing





Risk Assessments are in place for ALL activities

An Initial Site Risk Assessment is completed at the beginning of each term at each site.

A daily site check is always completed before each session respective of what site is to be used.

Dynamic Risk Assessments are completed on the spot as and when needed (you simply cannot plan for everything that children decide to do).



An example of this was when a group of children made a see-saw!

Forest
School is...



IMMERSIVE

INCLUSIVE

HOLISTIC

SENSORY

My Structure



I think its important to start the session with a game or team building challenge.

It develops communication, team work, confidence, gives the children ideas of what can be played at playtime, develops self-esteem, and playfulness.

We then go to the log circle and say our Forest School names and I always have a question for them to think about. This gives each child the opportunity to speak.

The children will then be given free time where they will choose what they would like to do.

I always offer at least one structured activity.



That's me by the way!



A Summary of Benefits



BENEFITS

Develops strength, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, hand eye co-ordination, spatial awareness

Develops communication, working with others, independence.

A connection with nature

Playfulness

Develops safe tool use

It encourages children to think about and establish their own boundaries for risk-taking

Develops self-esteem

Builds resilience and perseverance

Scaffolds learning through interaction with others

Children develop problem solving skills within groups and as individuals

Responsibility is encouraged by reaching Agreements rather than imposing rules

Thank-you for listening!

