



Social development

The very nature of Forest School experiences means that they often encourage co-operative working in groups. For example, an individual might be lifting a log to build a shelter and enlist help because they are struggling, or see someone else struggling and offer to help without being asked. These kinds of activities help young people to identify their own strengths, recognise the value that they bring to relationships and consequently learn to value the contributions made by their peers. Forest School provides endless opportunities for co-operation, social interactions and sharing.

Teambuilding activities form a key part of Forest School sessions for older groups. For example: working in pairs to saw wood to make a mallet, group fire lighting, cooking com

Intellectual Development

The Forest School environment is the perfect setting for the development of an enquiring mind. The journey to the country park, the walk to the Forest School site and the setting itself provides endless opportunities for young people to ask questions. Whose footprints are those? Why does the wood in the fire turn black? Why do the leaves turn a different colour? The regularity of Forest School sessions enables young people to experience seasonal changes and consequently make comparisons. The Forest School practitioner will not spend a session teaching about a particular subject but instead weave the learning process into a story or activity. For older groups the woodland setting provides the opportunity to participate in conservation tasks and learn practical skills including woodcraft and survival skills, and develop environmental knowledge and understanding.

Physical development

The Forest School setting gives young people space and freedom within defined boundaries. It gives them the opportunity to run, balance, jump and climb and consequently helps them to become more spatially aware. Physical challenges such as tree climbing, shelter building and obstacle courses give younger children the opportunity to experiment with their changing size and strength. They are given the opportunity to develop their fine and gross motor skills by handling things appropriately. For example: moving logs, playing pass the pine cone, climbing trees, whittling wood and tying knots.

Language and linguistic skills

Forest School promotes communication skills. It provides the opportunity for young people to express their feelings, ideas, thoughts and needs orally through exploratory and imaginative play and creative activities. By having direct contact with the natural world and being able to experience things first hand, the Forest School area can spark a young person's natural curiosity and provide ideas and observations to share through language.

Emotional development

The outdoor environment provides the time, space, peace and freedom for young people to establish deep thought processes. The Forest School ethos and setting provide an environment where they are able to develop the strength and resilience they may require to cope with emotional difficulties. Safety games encourage young people to take responsibility / show concern for one another. Review and reflection time encourages them to consider the impact other people have on



their Forest School session. For example, they may be asked if they can describe how somebody has helped them.

Building self confidence Young people have the time to become familiar and confident within their Forest School setting and accustomed to the routines associated with it. The familiar structure and content of Forest School aims to provide stability, security and consistency. Once the boundaries are known there is time for freedom of thought and the opportunity to take acceptable risks. Confidence may be boosted by learning new skills. For example: how to build a shelter, how to toast a marshmallow in the fire, or overcoming a fear or dislike. Forest School practitioners set small achievable tasks so the participant always feels a sense of achievement