

4

SAMPLE PROGRAMMES

- EARLY YEARS

FOREST SCHOOL SCOTLAND
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FOREST EDUCATION INITIATIVE



Section 4 - Sample Programmes

- Early Years

FOREST SCHOOL SCOTLAND

discover, develop, deliver



FOREST EDUCATION INITIATIVE

WORKING
WITH
EARLY YEARS
CHILDREN

"I have worked with a number of nurseries and found that by simply making a frame on the floor with 4 twigs/sticks and asking the child to "draw" a picture with materials found nearby...led to an amazing display of creativity. Ranging from sunflowers to rabbits, transformers to a large-scale airport (including a "no smoking" area...!), the children seem to delight in using natural materials to create a piece of fun art. This activity encompasses a multitude of tasks – artistic creativity, lateral thinking, appreciation of textures and colour, finding bugs, and a good deal of poking about in nooks and crannies

I also love to ask the children to collect little sticks and make a birds nest in areas where they think a nest should be (at Easter-time I pop in a few wrapped chocolate eggs for an extra bit of sparkle). This activity allows us to discuss why it is important for nesting birds to have privacy, be safe from predation, and how they go about finding and constructing nests."

Gillian Telfer, Biodiversity Officer for both East & West Dunbartonshire Councils



Even prior to the introduction of A Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, outdoor play and its benefits have been actively promoted for young children (previously in 'A Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5'). Most early years settings are active in taking their children outside or receptive to improving the quality of children's time outdoors. 'Nature Kindergartens' for example, have been developed and supported by Fife council education services. Highland council have ensured that all their early years' settings are supplied with outdoor clothing for their pupils.

Today, 'Early Years' is a term that embraces all young children from pre-school nursery age to primary three in school (approximately 3 – 8 years) and is reflected in the play based active learning advocated for this age group in ACfE.

A Forest School programme for the early years pays real dividends in the emotional, physical and cognitive development of young children. The children's balance and co-ordination improve, they overcome apprehension about getting dirty or wet, they work together helping one another and taking turns, they have time to themselves individually and in small groups, they develop their own games, and they begin to understand and appreciate their

Sample
Programmes
- Early Years

woodland. All of this contributes to their holistic development, whilst adults working with them may comment on a marked improvement in the children's speaking and listening skills.

The repetitive actions exhibited by young children during play and exploration to explore concepts during their learning and development, follow recognisable forms, and are described as schema. For example young children repetitively use trajectory, enveloping, transporting and other actions to explore concepts such as up/ down, inside/ outside, relationships, and function. By using careful observation to identify and support the range of schema used, adults can deepen the child's learning in the most natural way. Support of such 'purposeful play' for young children is now being advocated as good practice across Scotland.

A recording form for Observed Schema's and Preferred Learning Styles from Niddrie Mill Primary Forest School is shown in Appendix 15

When delivering Forest school to very young children, bear in mind that their perceptions of the woodland may be very different from yours. It may seem big, new and frightening, so structure your programme in order to introduce experiences gradually. Help the children to get to know the woodland by noticing and naming landmarks such as a log circle and interesting shaped trees. Make space for magic to stimulate curiosity and imagination. A 'Treasure Tree' near the entrance to your wood or site can work well. As they enter the wood, the children take turns to look in the 'Treasure Tree' and find something (e.g. a toy) that introduces the session. This can become a useful routine to build familiarity and set the scene.

Initially you may need to coax the children to go out and explore the woodland by getting them to search for something familiar. It may take a number of sessions before they feel confident enough to independently search the leaf litter and undergrowth to find woodland treasures like unusual leaves, sticks and minibeasts.

Young children's attention span may not be very long and certain activities will suit some children more than others. During winter months, even dressed up warmly, the children will get cold and miserable if they are not kept busy. (But remember 'good' weather for them will probably mean plenty of puddles to splash in!) Plan the session so that all the children can be involved in somehow at all times although always be ready to change your plans. Be ready for activities to be led by the children's interest, not yours, and be flexible on the timing of the structure and pace of the session. A high ratio of adults to children enables each child's interest and curiosity to be supported without a regimented group approach.

With young children it may be easier to engage the support of parent and family helpers, and this can reap huge dividends for the wider school community, as well as personally for the adults taking part in their child's journey through Forest School.

The process of building confidence both for participants and as Forest School leaders is illustrated by Sheila Cairns, teacher and Forest School leader at Coupar Angus Primary school in Perthshire. They have adopted the following approach as they develop their early years Forest School sessions:

Session plan examples for early years (including an under-8 years' group from a primary school) are shown in following Forest School programmes:

Session overview

- Session 1: Meet/reintroduce the woodland - H&S, boundaries, finish stand
- Session 2: Create a sense of belonging, develop use of tools
- Session 3: Create a natural shelter for a small animal or fairy folk if children show an interest or initiate the activity from previous session
- Session 4: Intro magnification – fairy & bug hunt if children show an interest or initiate from previous session
- Session 5: talk about bugs & habitat- needs, protection, food, camouflage if children show an interest or initiate from previous session
- Session 6: talk about woodland habitat and protection of the woodland itself!!!

Notes:

- Children are aged from 2 to 5 years
- Children have daily access to the woodland site for long periods of time in all weathers
- Planning is very flexible and child-led so any plans are only for suggestion and can be changed or not used at all
- Children are encouraged to use their imagination and use mainly natural resources found in the woodland site encouraging epistemic play
- Independence is encouraged and children are responsible for packing their own snack into their backpacks
- Children are encouraged and trusted to self risk assess

SESSION PLAN 1

Group (age/no. of): 2-5 and 10	Staff: Kate, Niki	Location: woodland's adjacent to Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten
Date: 4/9/07	Time: 0900 - 12.00	
Session Number and main activity: 1- Reintroduction to the woodland site - H&S, boundaries and exploration.		
Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● To re-establish the boundaries of the site● To re-establish appropriate behaviour and practice within the woodland● To encourage independence outside● To promote discovery, interest in and the investigation of nature		Curriculum links: EPS 1-3, 5-7, 12 C L 2,5,7,8,10 K&U 1,3,7,8,10, 12,14 E&A: 5 PD: 1,2,4,5,7,8
Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Familiarisation with staff, other children and the site● Develop knowledge of and confidence in about the woodland site● Familiarisation with verbal (calls), visual prompts (boundaries, signs), common practice on site.● Explore and investigate characteristics of a woodland habitat (floor cover, light, surroundings)		
Key Language: Boundary, meeting trees, geodome		
Resources: first aid kit, emergency bag, rope, string/wool, peep holes, frames, camera, binoculars		Differentiation: In explanations and closer proximity by adults for younger children
Risk assessment ref: 1- general RA		

Time	Activity	Links to learning and development	Progression
09.30 until 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Getting ready to go to Woodland site- children putting on own clothing, Wellington boots, backpacks, adults kit ● Talk about being in the wood while sitting around the fire pit. Encourage children to talk about possible boundaries, then suggest creating these and walking around them. Talk about keeping safe, suggest a game to call children -play 1,2,3 where are you? ● Allow free exploration of the woodland site- within the given parameters (children to have free access to cameras, frame/peep holes etc) ● children can access snack in backpacks when they want to ● Re-group, gather resources and have a discussion about the session and what children would like to do for the next session. ● Record consultation and session in the Talking and Thinking Floorbook. 	<p>EPS- familiarisation</p> <p>EPS, PD- familiarisation K&U, H&S- familiarisation H&S, EPS, C&L Familiarisation H&S, EPS, C&L, fun K&U, C&L, PD, fun K&U, C&L, PD, E&A, EPS</p> <p>EPS, C&L, PD EPS C&L, EPS, K&U, EA</p>	
Formative Evaluation:			
Next steps:			

SESSION PLAN 2

Group (age/no. of): 2-5 and 10	Staff: Kate, Niki	Location: woodland's adjacent to Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten
Date: 10/9/07	Time: 09.00 - 12.00	
Session Number and main activity: 2- Creating a sense of belonging (group community & site ownership) and develop the use of tools – also offer the opportunity to make woodland cookies		
Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● To reinforce the previous weeks H&S & Forest school ethos● To create a group identify/spirit● To develop tool use skills		Curriculum links: EPS 1-9, 12 C L 2,5,6,7,8,10,12,15,16 K&U 1,3,4,6-11,14 E&A: 1,2 PD: 1,2,7,8
Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Undertake Forest Schools best practice- follow H&S & ethos● Continue to develop basic tool handling skills and appropriate safe use of tools● Allow interested children to create their own cookie or other object as part of a group		
Key Language: Boundary, meeting trees, geodome, cookie, bowsaw, glove, hand-drill		
Resources: first aid kit, emergency bag, sawing stand, bowsaw, gloves, hand-drill, string, mark making equipment		Differentiation: In explanations and closer proximity/support by adults for younger children
Risk assessment ref: 1- general RA, bowsaw & hand drill RA		

Time	Activity	Links to learning and development	Progression
09.00 until 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Getting ready to go to woodland site- putting on own clothing, Wellington boots, backpacks, collect adults kit and walk to the site- ● Talk about being in the wood , refresh SOP's of last week ● Re introduce the bowsaw - explain how it can be used safely. ● Allow interested children to cut their cookie or practice using the bowsaw while others explore woodland opportunities. ● children to help themselves to own snack from their backpacks when ready ● Allow children the opportunity to drill holes in the woodslices & place string through the hole ● Re-group, tidy up, discuss mornings activities and consult children about options for next woodland visit ● Return to the Kindergarten ● record consultation and session in Talking and Thinking Floorbook with the children 	<p>EPS- familiarisation EPS, PD- familiarisation K&U, H&S- familiarisation H&S EPS, C&L Familiarisation H&S, EPS, C&L, PD K&U,C&L, PD, EPS</p> <p>EPS, C&L, PD, EA</p> <p>EPS C&L, K&U ESD, K&U C&L, EPS, K&U, EA</p>	
Formative Evaluation:			
Next steps:			

Group (age/no. of): 2-5 and 10	Staff: Kate, Niki	Location: woodland's adjacent to Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten
Date: 17/09/07	Time: 09.00 - 12.00	
Session main activity: create a natural shelter for a small animal or fairy folk if children show an interest or initiate the activity		
Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reinforce best practice in the wood● To explore the woodland habitat & environment● Create an appropriate home for a small animal or the fairies as identified by children● To promote discovery, interest in and the investigation of nature		Curriculum links: EPS 1-9,12 C L 1,2,5,7,8,10 K&U 1,3,6-10,12,14,19 E&A: 1-4 PD: 1,5-8
Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Work within a group co-operatively● To create a small built structure for fairies or other small creatures		
Key Language: Boundary, meeting trees, geodome, fairy house, animal home		
Resources: first aid kit, emergency bag, magnifying glasses, natural materials, small objects as stimuli, fairy cookies, children's cookies or objects made, rope/string		Differentiation: In explanations and closer proximity by adults for younger children
Risk assessment ref: 1- general RA		

Time	Activity	Links to learning and development	Progression
09.00 until 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Getting ready to go to Woodland site - putting on own clothing, Wellington boots, backpacks, adults kit, cookie or object made at previous session. ● Walk to the woodland site ● Sitting around the fire pit have a discussion about last sessions outcomes ● Children can choose to have snack they packed in their backpacks ● Allow children to find the fairies cookies, discuss small habitats and allow children to build fairy or animal home if they are motivated ● Re-group and tidy up, discuss morning activities and consult children on what they would like to do the following week. ● Record session and consultation in Talking and Thinking Floorbook with the children 	<p>EPS</p> <p>EPS, PD C&L, K&U, H&S rules H&S rules- ESD EPS, C&L, fun K&U, C&L, PD, fun</p> <p>K&U, C&L, EPS EPS, C&L, PD EPS C&L, EPS, K&U, EA</p>	
Formative Evaluation:			
Next steps:			

Group (age/no. of): 2-5 and 10	Staff: Kate, Niki	Location: woodland's adjacent to Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten
Date: 24/09/07	Time: 09.00 - 12.00	
Main activity: 4- Introduce magnification – fairy & bug hunt if children show an interest or initiate		
Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● To follow good Forest Schools practice● To explore the woodland habitat & environment● To promote discovery, interest in and the investigation of nature● To use magnification to discover and focus learning about the natural environment and fauna that inhabits it.		Curriculum links: EPS- 1-10, 12 C L 1,2,3,5,-10,15 K&U 1,2,3,5,7-10,12,14,15,17 E&A: 2 PD: 1,5-8
Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use equipment (magnification) to observe nature● Identify fauna at a basic level (introducing keys/photographs)		
Key Language: Boundary, meeting trees, geodome, key, magnifying glass, binoculars, diffraction lens, lens		
Resources: first aid kit, emergency bag, magnifying glasses, rope, string/wool, cookies, magnifying glasses, binoculars, other lenses, diffraction lenses, collection boxes, ID keys, photographs of bugs etc.		Differentiation: In explanations and closer proximity by adults for younger children
Risk assessment ref: 1- general RA		

Time	Activity	Links to learning and development	Progression
09.00 until 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Getting ready to go to Woodland site- putting on own clothing, Wellington boots, packing backpacks, adults kit, cookies or other precious object made ● Sitting around the fire pit, discuss being in the wood - what creatures live in the wood and any activities children would like to do ● Explore the woodland site for animals and bugs or evidence of them (magnifiers, collection pots) ● Try to identify some animals (photos, ID keys) ● Children to have access to cameras to take photographs. ● Children wanting snack to take this from their backpacks ● (Re-group and tidy up- discuss what they have seen and learnt in the woodland. ● Consult children on activities they would like to do next session. ● Record consultation and session in the Talking & Thinking Floorbook with the children 	<p>EPS</p> <p>EPS, PD K&U, H&S, C&L</p> <p>K&U, PD, EPS fun K&U,C&L, fun K&U, C&L, PD, fun EPS, C&L, PD</p> <p>EPS C&L, EPS, K&U, EA</p>	
Formative Evaluation:			
Next steps:			

Group (age/no. of): 2-5 and 10	Staff: Kate, Niki	Location: woodland's adjacent to Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten
Date: 15/09/07	Time: 09.00 - 12.00	
Session Number and main activity: 5 - Bugs and habitats - needs and protection		
Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● To explore the woodland habitat & environment● To investigate the protective measures animals take to stay alive● To identify the needs animals have to live● To encourage fun activity outside		Curriculum links: EPS: 1-10,12 C L: 2,5-10 K&U:1-5,7,-11,12,14,15 E&A: 1-4 PD: 1,3,5-8
Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Investigate the use of colour for protection● Investigate the basic needs of animals● Investigate animals homes/habitats		
Key Language: Boundary, meeting trees, geodome, 'the colours', worm, slug, beetle, spider, camouflage		
Resources: first aid kit, emergency bag, magnifying glasses, rope, cookies, coloured wool, face paints, photographs of animals/habitats, ID keys		Differentiation: In explanations and closer proximity by adults for younger children
Risk assessment ref: 1- general RA		

Time	Activity	Links to learning and development	Progression
09.00 until 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Getting ready to go to woodland site- putting on own clothing, Wellington boots, backpacks, adults kit ● Walk to the site ● Gather around fire pit and talk about being in the wood - and about the animals found last week ● Initiate talk about camouflage- Allow children to find hidden photos of animals! ● Talk about animals and camouflage – suggested role-play: camouflage self using leaves, mud or other natural materials ● Allow children to have own snack when they are ready ● Re-group and tidy up - discuss what they have seen and learnt in the woodland. Consult about plans for next session. ● Record session in the Talking & Thinking Floorbook with the children 	<p>EPS EPS, PD</p> <p>K&U, H&S</p> <p>EPS, K&U C&L, K&U, EPS</p> <p>K&U,C&L, PD, fun EPS, PD</p> <p>EPS C&L, EPS, K&U, EA</p>	
Formative Evaluation:			
Next steps:			

Group (age/no. of): 2-5 and 10	Staff: Kate, Niki	Location: woodland's adjacent to Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten
Date: 29/09/07	Time: 09.00 - 12.00	
Main activity: – talk about woodland habitat and protection of the woodland itself		
Aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● To explore the woodland habitat & environment● To promote discovery, interest in and the investigation of nature● To explore and start to understand elements that make up the woodland habitat & environment		Curriculum links: EPS 1-10, 12 C L 2,5-8,10 K&U 1-12,14,18 E&A: 1,2 PD: 1,5-8
Learning outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Investigate woodland soil & its properties● Investigate trees- their bark, leaves and roots		
Key Language: Boundary, meeting trees, geodome, soil, leaf, branch, root, bark, trunk		
Resources: first aid kit, emergency bag, magnifying glasses, cookies, ID keys, bucket, water, camera		Differentiation: In explanations and closer proximity by adults for younger children
Risk assessment ref: 1- general RA		

Time	Activity:	Links to learning and development	Progression:
09.30 Until 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get ready to go to woodland site - putting on own clothing, Wellington boots, backpacks, adults kit, ● Walk to the site- noting, important points on the way ● Sitting around the fire pit have discussion about being in the wood - what makes a wood, what is it like? ● Explore leaves- types, feel, shape etc ● Explore bark on trees- touch ● Encourage children to take photographs of what represents woodland to them. ● Allow children to have own snack when they are ready ● Re-group and tidy up – ● Discuss what they have seen and learnt in the woodland. Consult children on what they would like to do next session. ● Record session in the Talking & Thinking Floorbook with the children. 	<p>EPS EPS, PD</p> <p>K&U, C&L K&U, C&L, fun K&U, C&L, fun K&U,C&L, PD, EA K&U, C&L, PD, E&A, EPS EPS, C&L, PD</p> <p>EPS C&L, EPS, K&U, EA</p>	
Formative Evaluation:			
Next steps:			

Note: these Niddrie Mill Primary session plans have been included in this Early Years section as this is a young under-8 primary group

Niddrie Mill
Primary School
Edinburgh
scheme of
work for P2/3
(ages 6-7) -
Pete Carthy

NIDDRIE MILL
PRIMARY
SCHOOL:
SCHEME
OF WORK

Week	Activity Themes	Outputs	Medium Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes	Curriculum for Excellence
4th May	Safe & Base Camp Routine – Session 1	Awareness of Safety Issues Social Skills	Co-operative Behaviour	Better behaviour in and out of classroom	Confident Individuals
11th May	Safe & Base Camp Routine – Session 2	Improved team-work Social Skills	Increased self confidence	Better behaviour in and out of classroom	Confident Individuals
18th May	Safe & Base Camp Routine & Interpretation – Session 3	Awareness of Safety Issues Social Skills Skill development Motivation & concentration	Increased self confidence	Better behaviour in and out of classroom	Confident Individuals
25th May	Listening & Co-Operation – Session 4	Improved team-work Social Skills Motivation & concentration	Increased self confidence Co-operative Behaviour	Better motivated	Responsible Citizens Successful Learners
1st June	Listening & Co-Operation-Session 5	Improved team-work Social Skills Motivation & concentration	Increased self confidence Co-operative Behaviour	Better motivated	Responsible Citizens Successful Learners
5th June	Listening & Co-Operation + Minibeasts -Session 6	Flora knowledge Improved team-work Social Skills	Environmental Awareness/ Pride in neighbourhood	Better motivated	Responsible Citizens Successful Learners
22nd June	Mini-beasts – Fauna - Session 7	Fauna knowledge Knowledge & Understanding	Better motivation Environmental Awareness	Independent/ Focussed	Successful Learners Responsible Citizens
27th June	Woodland Art -Session 8	Physical skills Improved skill & knowledge	Increased self worth Environmental Awareness	Independent/ Focussed	Effective Contributors Responsible Citizens

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