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| **STATION 1: What do children want to do in the woods**  Think about the children you saw in the woods. What do they want to do outside? How can we support this? |

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| **STATION 2: What equipment is needed?**  We do not need every fancy outdoor item. What kit is necessary every week for the wellbeing and safety of the group? Is it portable? |

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| **STATION 3: What clothing works well?**  Look at the examples in the box. Look at the advice sheet about clothing. Do the samples match the advice? |

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| **STATION 4: Engaging adults**  How can we engage other staff, parents and others needed to ensure the Forest Kindergarten visits are a success? Who can help? Look at the cards and write down the role they could play in ensuring Forest Kindergarten is a success. |

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Description automatically generatedEQUIPMENT LIST**

Prior to leaving, the leader should ensure the administrator/manager at the centre has details of group including the adult’s mobile phone numbers and the route travelled to and from the site. Have this handbook in an accessible place too.

Check the following equipment is ready:

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| **Contact arrangements**   * Fully charged mobile phone for each staff member with relevant phone numbers, that has reception on site * Daily off-site register completed & details left with administrator/manager * Daily site check form   **Litter/dog mess management**   * Heavy duty bin liner bags * Sturdy gloves for adults and children * Plastic bags for small quantities of rubbish created by the group * Dog mess bags * Dog mess marking system   **Miscellaneous items**   * Spare clothes * First aid bag * Sunscreen/insect repellent * iPad or tablet * Any necessary medication for a specific child - follow your setting policy for administration & storage   **Snacks and drinks**   * Warm flask of drink on cold days * Spare 1 litre of water * Extra snack * Cups if needed |  | **Shelter**   * Tarp, tipi or bothy bag system * Fleece blanket (for warmth) * Space blanket (emergencies)   **Hand hygiene bag**   * Plastic bag for paper towels * Bottle/canister of warm water, soap, paper towels * Hand wipes for emergency use * Alcohol rub (for adults) * Tissues   **Toilet bag plus portable toilet/potty**   * Toilet paper in plastic bag * Biological waste bags * Travel potty or portable toilet * Tarp or other means of ensuring privacy   **Children’s backpacks**   * Snack * Drink * Portable seat * Spare hat, gloves, etc.   **Learning items**   * See the other list |  |

**Who can help us and in what way?**

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| **School cleaner**  **and janitor** | **Countryside rangers** |
| **School crossing patrol, escorts and drivers** | **Community councils**  **or community groups that look after woodlands, etc** |
| **Gardeners** | **Dog warden** |
| **Students** | **Local businesses** |
| **Parents and carers** | **Scout and guide leaders** |

**Clothing advice**

* Aim to keep temperatures even across the body.
* Ensure you are wearing layers of clothing. It’s the air trapped in and between the layers that insulate and provide heat.
* Avoid wearing denim jeans which get cold and heavy when wet. Cotton is not a good base layer for this reason in winter.
* Proper wool jumpers or synthetic fleece work well underneath a durable wind and waterproof jacket and dungarees.
* Wear thick socks, gloves and hat. Mittens keep hands warmer than gloves with fingers.
* Wear sturdy waterproof boots or wellies. These should be large enough to let a child wear thick socks and sole inserts to insulate. There should be wiggle room for the toes.
* Wear clothing that fits properly and is not too small or too big.

**Good features to look for in outdoor clothing:**

* Soft fleece collar with an adjustable hood on jackets
* Zip should have a flap on the inside to protect the child from being hurt when the zip is closed. Or show the child how to pull up a zip carefully!
* Jackets should cover the waistbands of trousers.
* The trousers should cover the boots and have elastic or velcro at the legs so that water is not let in even if the child jumps in puddles.
* Detachable hood that will come off if it gets caught on something.
* Machine washable.
* Wool socks are best as they absorb moisture and stay warm when damp
* Children’s boots should be sturdy and have heels for a better grip.
* Wide-brimmed rain hats like sou’westers ensure that rain runs over the back of the collar.
* Wide-brimmed sunhats are needed for sunny days. Baseball caps are not ideal as the neck can get burned. Have ones with a cloth that protects the neck.

**High visibility helps**

Black, brown, green, grey and other earthy camouflage colours are not good for children from a safety standpoint. A child who is lost is very hard to spot in such colours. It also makes it easier for you to keep track of the child when outdoors. Have reflectors that can be attached to the clothes or wear high vis vests if needed.

Bring extra socks and plastic bags. If a child steps in a puddle, you can replace their socks and put a plastic bag between the sock and the wet footwear.

**Play themes and loose parts play**

(Extracted from Casey, T. and Robertson J. (2016) *Loose Parts Play: A Toolkit* Inspiring Scotland p11-14)

The concept of loose parts and their affordances can be interwoven with studies about how children play outside, particularly in natural environments. There appear to be patterns to children’s play which emerge almost regardless of climate, culture, class, gender, developmental level or age. They link to how humans grow and their need for identity, attachment and a sense of connectedness to place, as well as people. In our rapidly changing world, we need to ensure children have opportunities to develop this sense of belonging and being with, rather than apart, from nature.

Jan White (2014) [[1]](#footnote-1), considered the work of David Sobel[[2]](#footnote-2), Jay Appleton[[3]](#footnote-3) and Ann Pelo[[4]](#footnote-4). She noticed similarities in their ideas that came from different decades and work with various ages of children and young people and proposed that their themes could be merged to provide a framework of reference.

This can help adults to understand how children play, to develop children’s attachment to nature and place and to provide engaging environments for playing with loose parts.

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| **Play Theme** | **Loose parts play provision** |
| **Adventure**  Seeking out the unknown, stretching limits of possibility, taking calculated risks, anticipation, discovery and invention. | * Exploration away from adult eyes (or perception of this) * Establishing a culture where risk taking is supported * Developing play provision to follow children’s lead * Providing time to listen and hear children’s experiences, should they wish to share |
| **Becoming at home**  Creating space, shelter, security, hiding and secret places, refuge and territorial boundaries. | * Resources for building dens * Props for developing the play within a den or secret place * Scrap cardboard and writing materials for creating signs * Nooks, crannies, trees and bushes or undergrowth to hide in or be alone * Large cardboard boxes and pieces of material both see-through and dark |
| **Prospect**  Searching out high places, views and look outs, surveying the landscape and mapping areas. | * Being high up – top of a hill * Climbing trees, boulders and other objects * Balancing on features * Play on different levels * Spyholes, gaps and see-through spaces, including windows and doorways |
| **Pathways and journeying**  The need for exploration, mapping out an area in many ways, finding short cuts and secret routes, tunnels, knowing the local area, making one’s mark in the landscape. | * Map making and using opportunities – both real and through digital devices * Trail making with natural resources and props such as ropes or chalk * Freedom to explore and get to know a local area |
| **Hunter-gatherer pursuits**  Searching, finding and collecting, stashing and hoarding, treasure hunts, traditional games like hide ‘n’ seek, foraging, bushcraft skills, fire, tool use. | * Time to invent and play games * Collecting and using natural materials * Containers such as pockets, bags, baskets and buckets * Using real tools to create, make and take apart different objects * Experiencing fire, * Bushcraft type activities: whittling, fishing, foraging |
| **Anthropomorphism**  Projecting self onto other living things, feelings for, and empathy with, plants and animals of all kinds, developing personal connections to wildlife through direct experience and fantasy, the significance of names. | * Ensuring time and space to discover wildlife on children’s terms * Creating places to hide and watch wildlife, creating habitat piles, bird feeding stations and nesting boxes, etc. * Simple props for dressing up and being animals |
| **Imaginative narratives**  Making sense of the world through fantasy play, small world play and creating stories and accounts of experiences that connect and deepen friendships and relationships between each other and the places they play, creating memories and reaffirming order and meaning. | * Constructing and deconstructing miniature worlds * Dressing up inside and out with open-ended props such as quick dry materials and simple, open accessories, marking or painting face and body * Making and creating fantasy characters * Listening to the stories children tell and recording them where appropriate * Ensuring ample undisturbed time for play to spark and emerge |
| **Making rituals**  Deliberate, ceremonial, meaningful actions often with metaphysical or transformational intent, invented by and participated in by individuals or groups; honouring or celebrating events, places, features through art, music, dance and role play; giving and receiving gifts. | * Attending to, honouring and supporting the development of the simple but significant rituals of children * Providing space, time, freedom and space for children to dance, make music and explore art inside and out * Celebrating play * Re-visiting places regularly and frequently such as local greenspace |

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Description automatically generatedResources for learning**

As much as possible, use nature and naturals materials found within your woodland site. Nature is the main resource! Not all of the list below are needed every time you go to the woods.

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| **Item** | **Advice** |
| **Magnifying glasses** | A variety of shapes and sizes is good. Children’s eyes work in different ways. Fresnel lens are plastic, flexible reading sheets which are also great fun for large scale magnification. |
| **Small plastic mirrors** | Remind children never to observe the sun or to flash the sun’s reflection at another child’s face.  Great for exploring and sensory activities outside. Introduction to symmetry  Can cut off corners if you feel they are too pointy. |
| **Pale or white coloured squares of material** | This can be an old cot sheet. Natural materials can be more easily seen on a pale background. Great for pattern work, games and activities. |
| **Bug boxes with lids** | Great for observing bugs. Some have built in magnifiers. Simple pots with breathing holes in the lid work well too. Or even a plastic cup.  Useful for storing found treasures |
| **Tarpaulin and other quick dry material** | For den building, role play, group games  Other lightweight quick dry material can be useful. |
| **Den building materials** | High vis guy ropes, pegs, Velcro, etc. for use with tarps. |
| **String and rope** | Useful for various jobs, artwork, pulleys, etc. |
| **Dry bags** | Useful for hanging up gear in wet weather and keeping kit dry. Translucent ones enable gear to be seen. |
| **Nature ID materials** | Have an array that match the interests of your group, the habitats you have and the seasons. |
| **Lead stick** | 1m with markings for measurement as well as leading |
| **Soft toy or puppet** | For songs, games, stories and role play – use Scottish wildlife or fantasy character if possible.  Avoid gender specific names  Having a puppet or soft toy in your pocket can be a really useful aid |
| **Small clipboards (A5 or A6) and pencils** | They are more portable than standard A4 ones.  Use scraps of card or recycled notebooks made from A4 paper for writing.  Important for messages of all sorts  Pencil: thick triangular type: less likely to break or need sharpening. Pencil will write in the damp |
| **Digital cameras or tablets** | Show children how to use them properly and let them take photos or use relevant apps suitable for use outdoors. |
| **Hammock** | For rocking, resting and enjoying movement. |
| **Hammock accessories** | To protect the tree bark  For putting up and taking down hammocks quickly and with ease |
| **Trowel** | For digging. Some children like to dig holes or look for things under the surface. |
| **Pocket maths resources** | One or two tools can lift the learning |
| **Mini reading books, poems and stories** | Little travel size books are good for cosy reads in the wood. Books created about the children’s adventures are also popular. |
| **Tablet or smartphone** | Relevant apps, e.g Nature ID ones  Built in apps, e.g. camera and video |

1. White, J. (2014) Ecological Identity – Values, Principles and Practice in Duckett, R. and Drummond, M. J. (eds.) (2014). *Learning to Learn in Nature.* Sightlines Initiative: Newcastle-upon-Tyne. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sobel, D. (2008). *Children and Nature: Design Principles for Educators.* Portland, OR: Stenhouse Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Appleton, J. (1975) *The Experience of Landscape*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pelo, A. (2013). *The Goodness of Rain: Developing an Ecological Identity in Young Children*. Redmond: Exchange Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)