

## Confidence

Forest school is the perfect place to develop confidence in yourself and your abilities. Child led learning enables the child to participate with ideas, activities, and resources they are interested in. Through regular sessions with a forest school leader who will facilitate these learning opportunities. Confidence is increased through making significant decisions about their own learning, assessing situations and calculated risk taking, which is encouraged in all settings for children to learn their own physical and mental limits. A simple activity like climbing a tree without adult approval or relying on an adult to do the activity, gives the child confidence in their own abilities to be able to climb the tree and make decisions on how high to climb, if the branches can take their weight, if they are keeping themselves safe and the environment safe.

## Self-Esteem

Self-esteem can be affected by poor physical health, negative life events and unstable relationships. Time outdoors taking part in physical activity will positively support development of both physical and mental health. Forest school sessions can support the development of self-esteem by giving children ownership and control of sessions. Freedom to choose which activities they take part in with opportunities to challenge themselves. Making a pencil starting with a piece of elder wood and finishing with an actual pencil you can write with after using tools and having own ideas to design it, is a perfect example of an activity that will challenge but lead to own success throughout the making process.

## Social Development

How people learn through interacting with others around them, developing their own individuality. This encompasses working as a team, communication, support, enjoyment and trust. This forms part of the overall SPICES model used in creating a holistic forest school. Many activities can be used to promote social development; Den building, Fire lighting and Nordic braiding to name a few!

## Emotional Development

Is the ability to understand, experience, express and manage feelings, to develop relationships with others. This includes a sense of achievement, pride, self-awareness and adaptability. As above, this forms part of the overall SPICES model. In forest school there are lots of activities that can promote emotional development; Making something from natural material and finishing it; a picture frame or mallet. Sessions including taking risks, learning own limitations and reflecting on activities, will all add to emotional development.

## Well-being

In forest school this is an area crossed over and inter-linked throughout. It is a holistic approach which is covered by SPICES model with each strand positively impacting well-being. The forest school environment allows learning at own pace, in own learning style, it is enjoyable, letting children grow and gain independence through self-discovery and self-evaluation through freedom to explore. Happy hormones; dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins are all released to help with feeling good whilst being outside, having fun, completing a task and being with others. Forest school envelopes it all.

# Forest School



Forest school aims to provide a platform where children are able to express their individuality through exploration, play and learning. Whilst in an outdoor environment children will be offered the opportunity to learn how to use tools and the natural resources around them to create examples of their individual imaginations. Whilst there is always an adult present, the forest school lessons aim to be child led giving the children the opportunity to take lead and proceed with the lesson. Being able to use the forest school, feel safe, have the ability to have free time to explore has a positive impact on wellbeing and self-esteem. As forest school provides tasks that require team work it also offers an opportunity for social development and a chance to create and strengthen friendships.

### Emotional Intelligence

Forest school gives opportunities for everyone to develop motivation, achievement, pride, confidence along with mental risk assessments. Using the forest school opens up an area of imagination that can allow the children to develop their own individuality and give them a chance to mentally assess any risks that they may encounter along the way. The children will achieve a sense of pride and confidence through the completion of the tasks set. Each task offers the ability for the children to push their curiosity through visual stimulation allowing them to trouble shoot to complete the task.

### Resilience

Whilst using the forest school the children are encouraged to never give up and to try new things. Forest school promotes mental risk assessments with the ability to determine benefit over risk, giving the children the opportunity to calculate the gain being greater than the loss. Each lesson may have a plan and an aim, but the lessons are child led with the ability for the children to determine the foundation of the lesson. Through support the children have the ability to develop self-worth and a sense of toughness through being out in the open. Forest school offers a tough love but safe approach to first aid, this gives the children the option to deal with any minor injury whilst staying in the forest school.

### Spiritual Development

Forest school provides a connection to nature through play and learning giving children a deeper understanding of the outdoors. Being outdoors inspires children to ask questions about the environment creating a knowledge that can help protect the planet in the future. Children have an open environment to explore and connect with nature learning about plant and animal life, opening up opportunities to explore how we can love and protect the forest school and our planet.

### Intellectual development Creativity

Having an open environment and the opportunity for the lesson to be child led each child as the ability to use their imagination and abilities to be as creative as they want. Using the natural materials and the tools provided the children have the ability to explore their creativity and show their individuality. Forest school provides a safe open space for each person to be as creative as they can be, this may be through art, crafts, making a game or just using their imagination to create stories about their surroundings.

Forest school provides a platform for children to push their imagination through creativity. Through activities and communication children can explore their surroundings which will enhance their opportunity to express their individuality through creation.

### Independent Learning

Forest school allows children to lead their own lessons and express themselves whilst using the natural resources in the environment. With a variety of tasks, materials and tools children are given opportunities to express their individuality through learning. The adults are available to aid the children and guide them throughout their time in the forest school. Using the adults as a resource the children can gain additional help to enhance their outdoor experience and get the most of their time in forest school.

### Physical Development & Wellbeing

The forest school program offers amazing opportunities to children and gives each child a platform to express themselves in an environment that has no limits. Mental health is just as important as physical health and forest school provides enrichment to aid both within a natural environment. Forest school has amazing benefits by offering space for physical exercise through climbing and exploring, along with lifting and pulling using different equipment. Forest school also has a powerful ability to promote personal wellbeing along with supporting the wellbeing of others. Being outside with fresh air, nature, and others who are also enjoying the same environment offers opportunities for everyone to interact and choose an activity that suits them. Forest school offers space for individuals to converse with people creating stronger or new relationships.