

Outdoor Learning Activities



Developed In Partnership with



Virtual School

Overview

This document contains ideas for outdoor learning that can be enjoyed while ensuring Government guidelines for social distancing are followed.

Activities are designed for use in a natural space but we have provided playground alternatives where possible.



OutLET: Play Resource is a social enterprise which provides Forest School, Outdoor Learning and Training across central Scotland.

They have been working in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council Virtual School to provide Therapeutic Forest School provision for those who need it.

To find out more about OutLET: Play Resource and the services they provide visit www.outletplayresource.co.uk





Journey Stick

It was traditional for the aboriginal people of Australia to create journey sticks to record their travels and help them retell stories to others. On each journey they would tie different objects that represented the places they visited, as well as feelings, thoughts and experiences that they had along the way.

The magical thing is that all sticks are unique to the creator.

If you can't go for a walk to a woodland space, you could make a Story Stick.

Pick or make up a story then tie craft materials to the stick to help you retell the story without the book.

Kit Needed:

Sticks (preferably ones fallen on the ground)
String or wool with difference colours
Elastic bands.
Crafting Material (if unable to go for a walk)
Stories



Top Tip

For lovely nature stories, we recommend
"Dancing with the Trees- Eco tales from the
British Isles" by Allison Galbraith & Alette
J. Willis

Learning About:

Imagination, Creativity, Focus,
Curiosity, Fine Motor Skills,
Empathy & Communication

Hapazome

'Hapazome' is also known as the Japanese art of leaf bashing. It is a creative way of using the pigment from flowers and leaves to make a print on cotton or other material.

These can be made into bunting or flags.

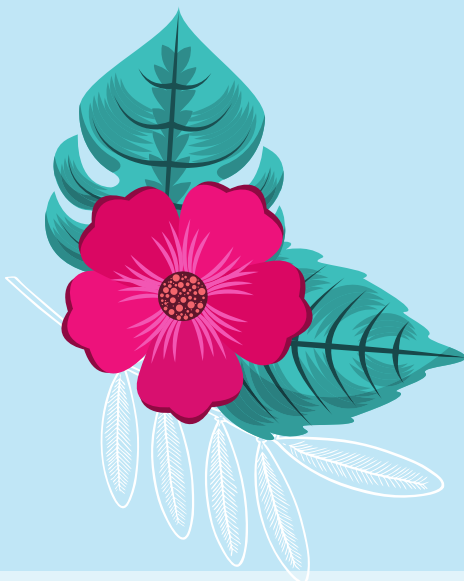


Top Tip

Supermarkets often have flowers that are beginning to wilt - they are often willing to give you them for free!

Kit required:

Chopping Block or hard surface
Cotton Material such as old pillowcase
Hammer
Flowers



How to make your own Hapazome picture:

Take your material and place it on a hard surface or chopping block.

Place flowers on half of the material and fold the other half on top.

Hold the material tight and then tap the material with the hammer over the flowers.
Open and reveal your picture.

A tutorial on how to do this can be found on our [YouTube Channel](#)

If picking from nature, please just take a little and leave the rest.



Natural Mandala

This activity is based on the work of Andy Goldsworthy and aims to reconnect children with the natural world that surrounds them.

It works wonderfully on a beach, in a wood or simply in the school playground and results in stunning art perfect for a pop up gallery..



Kit required:

Nothing but imagination and a woodland floor
Camera to capture the creations

How to Create a Natural Mandala:

Collect leaves, stones and other natural materials and create beautiful pictures on the woodland floor

Learning About:

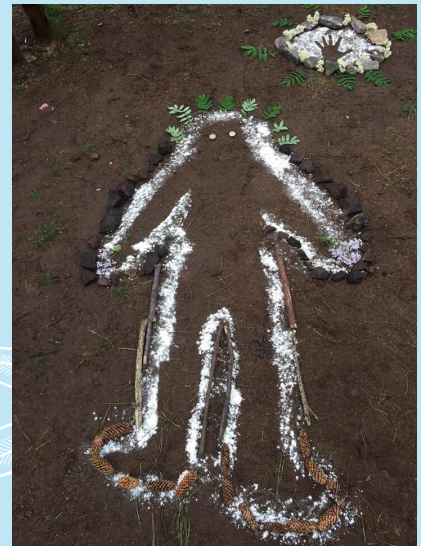
Creativity, Colour, Shape, Texture, Design, Symmetry, Focus

Top Tip

This Activity could also use supermarket flowers

Forest Spirit

Capturing the essence of the participants spirit in the woodland (or playground) and using them to tell stories and create characters.



The initial activity is to outline the participants bodies. They lie on the forest or playground floor and others sprinkle flour around their body. These can then be decorated using natural material.

This activity could then be enhanced by outlining objects or using this medium to enhance stories and create the characters.



Top Tip

In a playground you could also use chalk

Kit Needed:

Flour
Natural Materials

Learning About:

Imagination, Creativity, Respect for others, Communication, Story Telling.

Clay

Build a Boggart

A Boggart is a mythical creature... no one knows what it looks like.

Each child gets a lump of clay and can make their own boggart using their imagination and creativity.

Once dry, these can be painted.



Greenman Face

The greenman sounds a little scary when you don't know much about him, but he's a benign figure from mythology who can be found in several cultures around the world. He exists as a face surrounded by or made of leaves. Some depictions of him have leaves coming out of his mouth. If you start looking around you you will find him in many places across our towns and cities.



A loose interpretation of the Green Man concept which gives children lots of opportunities to collect and experiment with natural materials.

Kit Required:

To create your own green man you'll need some air-drying clay and some leaves, twigs and natural elements collected from a park or garden.

Unnature Trail

This activity help can children to understand the difference between natural and unnatural things by hiding objects camouflaged by nature.



1. Set the trail up prior to the participants arriving, approx 100m natural trail is long enough . Place the objects at intervals along the trail. Some could be very obvious, others could be hung from a tree or far away. All the objects need to be visible from the path. Mark the end of the trail. Note the kind of objects and how many of them you placed on the trail.
2. As an introduction, talk about ways animals use camouflage. Show pictures of animals hiding in plain site.
3. Explain to the participants that they are going on an “Un-nature Trail.” Normally you would go on a nature trail to look for animals and plants, which belong and live in that habitat. However, on this trail students will be looking for unnatural things, which do not belong here. Some may be difficult to see so they must look carefully.
4. Set them off singly, or in pairs, or in small groups far enough apart so that they cannot see what the people in front have spotted. The trail should be long enough so that everyone can be on it at once. It might be helpful to ask half the group to begin along the middle of the trail, and then come back and finish the first half. This way no one has to wait in line too long.
5. When participant reach the end of the trail, there are a few options to finish. You can ask the children to use their fingers to show you how many they found - or as a group you, as the leader can ask everyone together " who found X amount of items and then count down. (Our first number is always higher than the number of items in the trail)
6. You can ask the children to name them, and then go back through the trail to find all of the objects.

Calming Activities continued...

5, 4, 3, 2, 1

This is a mindful activity which encourages the children to become aware of their surroundings and present in the moment.



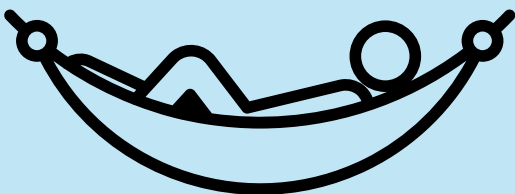
The children work individually, the leader asks them not to speak and to notice ..

- 5... things they can hear
- 4... things they can touch
- 3... things they can see
- 2... things they can smell, and
- 1 thing that they didn't expect to notice



Approx 5
minutes

They can then choose to talk and share their observations with the group.



Hammock

Allowing children to use hammocks is a proven way to help calm behaviours.

Gentle swinging in a hammock can help children and young people regulate their sensory system, which in turn calms the child.

We have created a video on how safely use a hammock.

<https://youtu.be/PE9X8Z69yIk>

When using a hammock, we also recommend that you put up a swing where possible, this is to make sure that the hammock remains for calm swinging and bigger movements can then be made on the swing.

Information on how to make a tree swing can be found on our [Youtube Channel](#)

Hammocks must be accessible from ground level and only used by 1 person at a time

Physical Activities

Providing the opportunity to take part in physical activities enables the children to make big movements which can help regulate their sensory systems, which in turn can lessen unwanted behaviours while providing opportunities for team work, communication, turn taking and problem solving.

Stream Exploration

A favourite activity during Forest School with Virtual Schools has been exploring streams. It's a great way for children to challenge themselves physically, while seeing first hand the impact that they can make on the natural environment.

It's also a visual reminder of action & consequence.



Top Tip

Spare clothes will be needed for both of these activities- the children won't be able to keep dry!

Building Dams and Making Bridges are popular activities when exploring streams so may be worth carrying out a risk assessment of these activities before hand



Climbing Muddy Slopes

Children can't resist a muddy slope. Allowing play on a muddy slope provides opportunities for team work, problem solving and turn taking. As well as introducing an element of risk.

You could take a rope and tie it to something at the top (using Round Turn and 2 Half Hitches - instructions for this knot are on the you tube channel)

Dynamic Risk Assessing is essential in these activities.

For guidance on Dynamic Risk Assessment follow this [link](#)

Games

Below is an outline of some quick outdoor games that need little no to equipment



The Classic..... Floor is Lava

This is a simple game which can be used throughout the day and usually needs little to no instruction for the children.

The leader shouts "Floor is Lava" at unexpected times of the day then everyone, including the leader, has to get their feet off the floor as quickly as possible.

This game can be a good way to distract from unwanted behaviours or to de-escalate a situation before it arises.

You're Only Safe When.....

This is a similar game to floor is lava, but enables the leader to change the activity which makes them safe.

For example " You're only safe when you're touching something green"

"You're only safe when standing on 1 leg."
The possibilities are endless



Skipping Games

3 person skipping games are a good way to encourage team work while burning off excess energy and allowing children to make big movements (helping regulate the sensory system)



Thank You

If you have any questions about the activities above, or you would like further support for your Outdoor Learning provision then please contact Jackie@outletplayresource.co.uk and she will arrange a time to offer telephone support.

To find out more about OutLET:Play Resource you can visit our website

www.outletplayresource.co.uk

We are also on [Facebook](#) and [Linkedin](#)