

Welcome to the Woods

Suitable for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage of Pre-School and school Reception Class age.

This programme is designed to encourage young children to explore in the forest and to make good use of their senses but leaving time for lunchtime. It is intended as a means to increase their awareness of the world around them and to encourage confidence through talking part in group activities. It involves a range of games and activities in the outdoors followed by some simple craft work to reinforce learning through creativity and discussion with adults and by providing reminders of the visit.

Key Concepts

Using the senses to increase understanding and knowledge of the world.
The forest is an exciting place to be with many things to discover.
The forest is a home for a wide range of plants and animals

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the programme pupils should

- Know that forests are exciting places to visit and wish to visit again to discover more.
- Know that a range of plants and animals live in the forest
- Know that colour is important in nature.
- Know that some animals don't use sight very much.
- Know that some plants can be poisonous and should not be touched.
- Have made some progress in developing observational skills and language.
- Have taken some small measured risks and learned a little about their physical capabilities as well as developing them.
- Have produced craft or art work inspired by the time spent outdoors.
- Used language to give facts or express feelings about being in the woods.

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- to prepare children for activities in the forest by stimulating their interest and imagination
 - to be aware of the special features of the season of the visit
 - to ensure that adults and children understand all safety rules
1. Welcome to Alice Holt – it's a lovely place where lots of plants grow and animals live as well as being a great place to come to have fun. There's a lot to explore but we need to remember to take care of it too.
 2. Story – Only Made of Wood, a Windy day or other suitable story for the season.
 3. Safety

Learning Objectives	Activity
<p><u>Outdoors</u> (Beech wood route)</p> <p>To learn about camouflage and colour in nature.</p> <p>To take part in healthy exercise</p> <p>To know that worms are camouflaged</p>	<p>Woolly Worms – an active game in which children collect lengths of coloured wool and learn how some creatures use colour to help them hide. This can be expanded to mention that bright colours also have a purpose according to children’s existing knowledge and ability. Worm charming. This involves sustained jumping up and down to simulate heavy rain and encourage worms to come to the surface to observe their colour.</p>
<p>To learn something about the lives of burrowing animals</p>	<p>Observe molehills and consider how moles live. Watch a while to see if Mr. Mole comes out.</p>
<p>To develop observational skills</p> <p>To encourage use of language</p> <p>To encourage confidence to speak in a group and express thoughts and information.</p>	<p>Observe the pond and consider what lives in and on it. Watch a while to see moorhens, ducks, dragonflies, fish and pond insects. Look at the plants around the pond, observe colours, size, shape etc. Ask children what they can see?</p>
<p>To encourage concentration and observation of surroundings and/ or the leader.</p> <p>To increase awareness of the woods as a home for animals.</p>	<p>Walk very quietly and creep into the woods in the hope of seeing squirrels or birds. Alternatively, play ‘follow my leader’ (older children) as a means of getting to the woods.</p>
<p>To develop concentration.</p> <p>To learn about the woods through a sense other than sight.</p> <p>To develop descriptive language.</p>	<p>Listening. Children sit on a log or on the ground and listen to the sounds of the forest for a few minutes. They count the number of different sounds on their fingers. Afterwards, individuals describe a sound to the rest of the group.</p>
<p>To learn about the woods through a sense other than sight.</p> <p>To develop descriptive language.</p>	<p>Feel trees, stumps, leaves etc with eyes shut. Those who wish to have one may wear a blindfold while feeling (not while moving). Children talk about what they feel with an adult during the activity</p>
<p>To have fun in the woods</p> <p>To increase understanding of concepts such as biggest, tallest, widest.</p> <p>To increase understanding of the forest environment</p>	<p>(Autumn and winter only) Leaf storms, making piles of leaves, jumping into leaves etc. Alternatively and at other times of year leaves can be collected and sorted in ways chosen by the children</p>

To take part in healthy physical activity To develop creativity	or used to make patterns and pictures on the ground
To aid physical and cognitive development through physical activity	Balancing and jumping off long low logs (provided they are not wet and slippery)
To develop observational skills and a sense of wonder	Explore with magnifying glasses in a selected area of the woods
To develop awareness of the variety of scents in the forest. To develop a sense of wonder To encourage imagination and creativity To develop language skills	Smelly Cocktails in the hands. Collect a range of small pieces of scented vegetation, smell each and mix them together, make up a name for the mixture and throw it into the air
To develop awareness of the variety of colour in nature and build on lessons from Woolly Worms (or of the great diversity in nature).	Palettes. Children collect small pieces of vegetation and stick them onto sticky tape on a small card. This can be adapted to be a collection of any small items as a reminder of the visit or a collection of things with different textures.
To encourage observation and provide a link between outdoor learning and indoor follow up activities	Collect items e.g. leaves, small sticks, cones for use in indoor art and craft work.
<u>Indoors</u>	
To encourage creativity based on the outdoor experience	Collage
To encourage creativity and role play based on the outdoor experience	Mask making

Other possible activities

- 'Magic' Painting using water on trees- imaginative work
- Minibeast hunt
- Art using sticks, leaves etc.- creativity
- Collecting items – comparison of length, width, shape, colour etc – numeracy, problem solving, language development
- Story walk – imagination, physical activity, greater awareness and observational skills
- Dragon dancing – imagination, physical activity
- Jumping off low surfaces e.g. tree stumps, logs – balance, co-ordination, fun, learning to assess risk

Links with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

There are many links and the following are examples of aspects of the framework addressed by the programme activities:

Personal Social and Emotional Development

- Building confidence, initiating ideas and speaking in a familiar group

- Developing awareness of own views and feelings and learning sensitivity to those of others
- Working as part of a group, taking turns, learning to work together harmoniously

Communication, Language and Literacy

- Interact, listen to and use spoken language
- Extend vocabulary
- Explore and experiment with sounds and words

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

- Comparatives e.g. more, less
- Recognise and create simple patterns
- Describe shape and size
- Compare quantities
- Compare numbers

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations
- Use all senses to investigate
- Ask questions
- Find out about and identify some features of things observed
- Build and construct with a wide range of objects
- Find out about their own environment and talk about the features they like and dislike

Physical Development

- Move with confidence, control and co-ordination (space and uneven surfaces (e.g. of woodland) essential to develop these.
- Balance

Creative Development

- Respond in a variety of ways to things seen, heard, smelt and touched
- Express and communicate thoughts and feelings using a widening range of materials, imaginative and role play, movement, design, songs and musical instruments
- Explore colour, texture, shape, form and space
- Use imagination in art, design etc