

Subject: Outdoor learning

Golden Concept: Life Skills

Purpose:

Forest schools incorporate life skills into their curriculum to provide pupils with a holistic and hands-on learning experience in a natural environment. The purpose of integrating life skills at forest school includes:

Holistic Development: Forest schools aim to nurture the overall development of children, including their physical, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects.
Resilience and Independence: Being in a natural setting encourages children to become more resilient and independent. Life skills such as environmental awareness, outdoor survival skills, and a sense of responsibility toward the natural world are instilled, fostering a deeper connection and understanding of the environment.
Teamwork and Social Skills: Working and playing in a forest setting often involves group activities. Life skills like teamwork, communication, and cooperation are developed as children engage in collaborative tasks and activities.

Assessment:

The emphasis is on holistic development, assessment methods should capture a range of skills, behaviours, and attitudes.

Observation/Natural Environment Interaction: Observe how students engage with and navigate the natural environment. Look for signs of curiosity, exploration, and comfort in the outdoor setting.

Applied Skills: Assess life skills through activities. For example, a group activity to build a shelter or identifying plants/trees can demonstrate problem-solving, teamwork, and creativity.

Collaborative Skills: Encourage students to assess their own and their peers' contributions during group activities. This promotes self-awareness and a deeper understanding of teamwork dynamics. Observe their communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

Cross curriculum:

Integrating life skills across various curriculum subjects is an effective way to enhance the overall educational experience and prepare students for real-world challenges. Life skills are essential competencies that go beyond academic knowledge and can be applied across different areas of life. Here are some examples of how life skills can be integrated into various curriculum subjects:

English: Communication Skills: Reading, writing, and speaking activities can focus on effective communication, persuasion, and public speaking. **Critical Thinking:** Analysing literature, debating, and discussing themes and characters can develop critical thinking skills.

Mathematics: Problem-Solving: Math problems and real-world scenarios can be used to teach problem-solving skills and logical reasoning. **Financial Literacy:** Math concepts can be applied to real-life financial situations, teaching budgeting, saving, and understanding economic principles.

Science: Critical Observation: Scientific experiments and observations can enhance critical thinking and observation skills. **Environmental Awareness:** Science lessons can incorporate discussions about environmental issues and solutions, fostering sustainability awareness.

Physical Education: Physical Health and Well-being: Engaging in outdoor activities promotes physical health and well-being. Life skills related to physical fitness, coordination, and healthy living are naturally integrated into the forest school experience.

Key Stage or stage breakdown:

Bronze: Pupils will develop exploring new surroundings and working as part of a team. Communication skills are learnt during this stage and the understanding of listening to one another opinions. Pupils will learn how to climb trees, build dens and how to make a shelter. Throughout this stage the emphasis is on teamwork and working together to achieve a common goal.

Silver: Pupils will begin to understand key words used within the forest and be able to apply and identify their surroundings. Pupils will further develop independent skills by completing individual tasks while at the forest.

Gold: Pupils develop life skills through knowing how to safely create a fire circle and light this in order to cook food. This has wider benefits of knowing how to cook for yourself.