

Ideas for getting outside in nature at the moment

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So, while Forest School is a long term pedagogical approach, there are activities that are used that are very useful for everyone and can be adapted to use alone or in small groups. so just a few thoughts from IFSA.

First, if you are not used to getting outside, - and if you feel that it's too cold, or wet, the key thing is to dress properly - lots of layers, hats and gloves and most important a rain jacket and leggings - this are so important if you want to sit down or lie down or relax in nature.

Second, if you are not so used to getting outdoors, then bring a hot drink - tea or hot chocolate in a flask or even lidded cup, or a plastic bottle - it will keep warm for a while. Bring a bottle of water and some biscuits or chocolate (we all need a treat!)

Third, where to go? Well, your local park has trees, your garden, anywhere near your home that has some nature where you can sit apart from others and be still and feel comfortable, a beach, sand dunes, local fields,

If you want to try to get into the Forest School idea, then try getting outside to the same space, every day round the same time, and try to spend a little longer there each day. You can go alone or with family or friends, any small group.

Sit Spot

Start by finding a 'sit spot' - a place in the woods where you can sit and be still. Listen out for the bird song and other sounds. Try to do this for 1/3/5 minutes. Over time you begin to realize that the birds and other creatures in nature are in constant communication. Look around your spot - what do you notice? At this time of the year, the beginning of growth is everywhere. If you are with others, after a time, come back together and sit in a circle (2m apart!) and share. If you are alone, you could write or draw your thoughts and ideas.

Gratitude.

All FS sessions start and end with saying thanks - think about your day so far and one thing you are grateful for. Again, if you alone, you can say it aloud, write it down or draw it. If you are with others you can share. Try and include some thanks to nature - it could be for the brightness, the new growth, a bird, a flower that you observed or heard.

Play!

Sounds weird, but worth a try. As we get older we often forget to play the way children can!

Play chasing if you are with others - helps to warm up as well.

Gather sticks, cones, leaves, conkers, acorns, bits of feathers and make a den, a fairy house, a design and leave it there for your next visit or for others to enjoy.

Mix clay with water to make your own clay and make a tree spirit. Paste it onto a tree and decorate with twigs/ leaves, berries etc.

Make mud pies the same way!

Whittling sticks is very relaxing. Gather sticks - bring some veggie peelers if you are not used to knives and find some sticks and get whittling.

Take photos of the things you did

If you try these, lots of other ideas will come to mind.

Before you leave, try the sit spot again and the gratitude and leave quietly, to return the next day.