

New connections-ANZIF and the development of Forest Schools

Presentation at ANZIF Conference

Tuesday 27 August 2019

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My background and why I'm here



Forestry and education

- ▶ Positioning for the future
- ▶ Ensuring relevance and survival
- ▶ First step - acknowledging the need to change
- ▶ Working with different 'others'



The development of Forest Schools

- ▶ What are Forest Schools?
- ▶ Growth in United Kingdom - England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland.
- ▶ Growth supported by UK Forestry Commission initiatives
- ▶ Research generated about the benefits of Forest Schools

O'Brien, L., & Murray, R. (2006). *A marvellous opportunity for children to learn. A participatory evaluation of Forest School in England and Wales.*



Benefits of learning in nature

- ▶ Ofsted (2008) found the engagement in lessons conducted outside the classroom enhanced children's understanding of curriculum subjects, supported children's personal, social and emotional development and could address underachievement.
- ▶ Spending time in nearby nature leads to improvements in mental health and emotional regulation, both for specific groups of children (such as those with ADHD) and for children as a whole (Gill, 2014).
- ▶ Learning in a natural environment has been linked with the development of self-regulated learning, creativity and academic attainment (Kim, 2011).

Why get involved?

- ▶ New Zealand based research suggests that when children spend time in the forests that they acquire *'personal tacit knowledge of the usefulness of the forested environment as opposed to abstract, generalized ideas...'*
- ▶ *Landscape amenity, also attachment to and identity with their local forest appear to be important to school children.'* In addition, the same research concluded that *'school children's view and understanding of forests in New Zealand offer an insight into the integration of local communities with forest components, forestry activities and forest amenities.* Bayne et al. *New Zealand Journal of Forestry Science* (2015) 45:20



Listening to the voices of others

- ▶ Opportunity to make connections, start a conversation
- ▶ Going outside of our own walls for new ideas
- ▶ Forest schools - a no brainer

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