

## Continuous Learning Opportunities For Parents/Carers

### **Self care & life skills**

Model good hand washing routines and discuss why this is important.

Encourage children to put their own outerwear on and button/zip garments.  
Support as necessary.

Have a picnic snack outdoors. Support children to prepare, serve and clear away snack.

Encourage independence wherever possible, e.g. running ahead in a safe outdoor space. Offer appropriate guidance, e.g. If you can't see me I can't see you.

Play outdoor games, e.g. What's the Time Mr Wolf, Hide and Seek, Hopscotch. Take turns to enhance co-operation and turn taking skills.

Support active listening, encouraging children to think about when it is time to listen and time to speak.

Give children appropriate language to identify areas of body during wild toileting in the outdoors.

Encourage a growth mind set (i.e. encourage children to believe that they will achieve if they keep trying and don't give up)

### **Health & Wellbeing**

Enjoy time outdoors where possible following current guidelines.

Respect children's choice. When they are not possible always explain why not.

Talk together and allow children to discuss their fears/worries/concerns.

Encourage children to move their bodies in lots of different ways, dancing, spinning, rolling, jumping, climbing & running on as many different terrains as possible.

As the weather gets warmer encourage walking in safe spaces in bare feet.

Encourage risk taking, using enabling language.

Encourage self-risk assessing. Ask questions like 'Does that feel safe, what do you need to do to keep yourself and others safe? Do you need help to achieve that?'

Allow access to mud/dirt where possible – micro-bacteria in the soil contains serotonin (the happy hormone) that can be absorbed through the skin. Make mud pies or bake mud cakes. Challenge your children to make a marvellous muddy meal.

Encourage rolling down hills – this is a fantastic way to exercise our vestibular system that controls our balance and eventually our ability to concentrate.

Climb up inclines and hills

Build an obstacle course out of loose parts to develop gross motor skills.

### **Social Studies**

Planting bulbs and seeds is a brilliant way to increase health and wellbeing. It also allows for the opportunity to observe how seeds and bulbs develop through time.

Plant a seed inside a plastic bag with soil, attach to a window and observe.

Plant a bulb in see through receptacle and watch what happens

Take a trip to a local river. Lots of opportunities to discuss the water: how deep it is; where does the water come from; what if anything lives in it; what makes it become deeper/shallower; do naturally sourced items float or sink in the water; how can we tell how deep it is, how/what can we use to find out; how fast/slow is it flowing; is it safe to paddle in/how do we know?

Build a dam from sticks in a nearby river or even build a dam in the bath and discuss what happens.

Play Pooh Sticks.

Jump in puddles – again some of the questions above can be asked. Encourages problem solving.

Visit a pond. Watch the water. What can you see? Does anything live in/on there? Discuss and identify. Look out for frogspawn. What do frogs start out as? How do they develop? Spot birds on the water and identify them. Throw small items in, this helps the creatures under the water to breathe.

Investigate insects and creepy crawlies. Look under logs and stones or dark damp spaces where they like to live. Identify what you find using online resources or other medium.

Study bees. Where can you find them? What do they do? What are they collecting? Why are they important? Where do they live? Who is in charge? What names are given to the different bees who live in the dwelling? What is a large group of them called? What are their jobs? If you can't see any outdoors yet why not have a look at

some online? Could you make a home from things you already have that would encourage them to visit?

Listen to the birds and observe them. If you can't get outside you can do it from your window. What are they doing? Why are they doing it? When will their babies be born? What will they look like to begin with? How many different kinds of birds can you see? Can you keep a tally or write the number?

Look at the flowers when out and about. Can you identify them? Do you know their names? How can you find out if you don't already know? Can you keep count of how many different kinds you see?

In local woodland study the trees. How are they changing? How do they differ? Which is the tallest one you can find? Or the shortest, widest or narrowest. Do you know their names?

Encourage children to take responsibility for any pets they have at home e.g. feeding, cleaning, nurturing etc. Research suggests that if we can look after pets we have a better chance of taking good care of ourselves.

Talk about the seasons. Identify the changes. What can you see that you haven't seen before? Is there anything different?

In nearby green spaces investigate for animal prints. Can you identify them? What could have made them? Where do they live? Can you spot signs of their dwellings? What is the male called and the female? Do you know what you call lots of them? What are their babies called?

Gather rubbish when out and about. Take responsibility for the environment – be a responsible citizen.

Study the weather – use conditions to facilitate experiences, i.e. make bin bag kites on a windy day, time ice melting in sunny conditions using a timer, fill a clear bottle and mark it with numbers – record how much rain falls. Use the sun to study your shadow. Is it in front of you or behind you? Is it longer or shorter than you? How can you change this?

### **Mathematical & Numeracy Based Activities**

Find natural resources (i.e. flowers, stones, sticks, pinecones, leaves and order them by size, colour, shape etc.

Make patterns using natural resources. Increase challenge by making more complicated designs.

Share songs/rhymes that include numbers (see [Scottishbooktrust.com](http://Scottishbooktrust.com) for Songs and rhymes app)

Share number/math based stories in new places. Stories outdoors can be really fun and you can be as loud as you like. – Libraries are currently offering free access to a number of resources online.

Draw a hopscotch grid and identify numbers as you play.

Make eco friendly home made dough - get recipes online and get measuring and counting.

Make arrows out of sticks and follow the direction of the stick and see where you end up.

Fill a receptacle with water. Lots of opportunities to introduce/expand mathematical language, e.g. full, empty, deep, shallow, more, less, and where appropriate introduce fractions, i.e. half, quarter etc]

Drop different items into the receptacle and observe whether they sink or float. Think about why this happens.

Spot numbers on doors, cars, buses etc when out and about

Find ice out and about and identify the shapes you find.

### **Problem solving Activities**

Build dens from natural or man made materials

Make ice blocks and think of ways to make them melt/ destroy them.

Climbing – how can you go higher safely?

Making dough – what do you need to add to get the right consistency?

Encourage thinking about what can you do to make challenging situation less so

Ask what is needed to do to be able to complete a task to encourage perseverance and resilience.

Jump in puddles

Paddle in rivers

Build a three dimensional volcano from sticks and other natural resources.

### **Literacy Based Activities**

Re-enact familiar stories in outdoor spaces, e.g. Going on a Bear Hunt, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Little Red Riding Hood, The Gruffalo. Use natural resources you can find to represent aspects of the story. (

Get children to tell you stories your daily adventures (known and made up)

Make up stories together that reflect the environment you are in.

Use natural props to enhance story time – open-ended resources can be absolutely anything – a stick can be a wand, a sword, a snake, a broomstick, a horse etc.

Share songs and rhymes. Challenge children to think of songs about particular subjects.

Point out and talk about signs you see out and about. Discuss what they mean.

Draw simple maps in advance of setting out on a journey and follow them to reach your destination

Find maps of local area, see what you can spot and discuss together.

Make marks in sand/mud/gravel/chips – whatever is around using different types of tools e.g. sticks, stones etc.

Use non-fiction books/resources to gather information in relation to a specific interest.

Make language fun by introducing alliteration and make up silly sentences about what you can see around you or what you are doing.

Gather items on your adventure and then use them to tell the story of your day

### **Expressive Arts Activities**

Use natural resources to create art-process based art is fantastic for developing confidence and self esteem as there is no desired outcome which in turn is known to enhance creativity.

Crush berries/flowers/charcoal to make natural paint

Make mud paint

Create natural paint brushes from sticks, leaves, pinecones etc.

Draw in the mud/sand/gravel or whatever is around

Use chalk to make marks in and around the outdoor environment

Use homemade dough to create works of art on surfaces outdoors. Good for introducing emotional literacy e.g. making faces to reflect how you are feeling.

Happa Zome – collect leaves, flowers, berries, cover with paper or material and tap with a hammer/stone. The imprint of the item below the material/paper will be transferred. Good for getting out frustration and calming down challenging situations, for hand eye co-ordination and as an interesting alternative to early mark making.

Gather natural resources and get creative. What can you make with sticks? A wand, a sword, a stick animal, a person, a bug hotel, a fairy house?

Create transient art with what you can find around you

### **Technology Activities**

Encourage and support the use of real tools in a safe environment.

Add appropriate apps to devices and use together to support learning.

### **Useful Organisations online**

Midlothian Libraries

Scottish Book Trust

Play Midlothian

Play Scotland