

Forest School

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



The development of a Forest School approach is a new initiative at Hungry Caterpillars and one that we have been preparing for over the last few months. Several staff have been attending an accredited Level 3 course for Forest School Leaders and we have nominated Lisa Rae, our Perivale Nursery manager, as our Lead Forest School Teacher across the company. You may be aware that some elements such as; the mud kitchen, vegetable gardens, insect gardens and nature walks are already imbedded in practice across our nurseries. However the next step is to start taking small groups of children out to explore local woodland and park areas.

What is a Forest School?

"Studies have shown that spending time in natural environments helps with recall and memory, problem solving and creativity. Children (and adults) who spend more time outside are also physically healthier."

David Suzuki

Forest School is a growing philosophy in the UK and has been adapted from the approach of Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden and Denmark. The philosophy is based on the desire to provide young children with an education that encourages an appreciation of the wide, natural world and which would encourage responsibility for nature conservation later in life. Forest School draws on the work of a number of educational theorists, including, Fredrich Froebel, John Dewey, Margaret McMillan, Rudolph Steiner, Susan Isaac's and Chris Athey. It fits well with the play based principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the emphasis on quality outdoor learning experiences.

Hungry Caterpillar's Forest School

Above all, our aim is to make Forest School fun! We will be running weekly sessions, primarily for the pre-school aged children, at each of our nurseries. Sessions will take place in the local natural environment where possible, in a close proximity to the nursery. Our aim will be to build on children's knowledge and familiarity of an area and give them the opportunity to lead their own learning by exploring. All of the planned activities will be based on the children's interests as well as giving them the chance to experience new things. The weather will not be a barrier as children will be provided with all-weather suits and bring wellies from home. This approach will help children to understand and manage risk, develop confidence, self-esteem, language skills and nurture a love of the outdoors.

Individual nursery managers will be in contact with you as the programme develops with further details but please feel free to ask. If you would like to know more please visit: <http://www.forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/>