WORKSHOP: NATURE

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WHAT MATERIALS?

This workshop will focus on the foundations of understanding nature and related scientific knowledge. It will provide participants with practical hands on experience of how to use the natural outdoor environment to support children's explorations and understanding of their place in nature. There will be opportunities to investigate nature in everyday life, its beauty and knowledge of nature itself.

In urban settings, it is a challenge or educators to provide experiences in outside areas, growing fruit, vegetables and flowers, and to see how insects and other animals contribute to our world.

In this workshop materials will be offered which help children to explore and understand in very tangible ways the importance of the natural world. The emphasis will be on low technology, making a flower press, sundial, bug hotel, wormery and planning a nature walk.

HOW TO USE THE MATERIALS WITH THE CHILDREN

Plants – growing things and showing children the steps in planting and caring for theplants

Insects and worms – helping children to see why these matter in creating the world we live in and are central to life on our planet, which we share with them.

Planning nature walks – In allcontexts children need to understand that the natural world is present and is part of their lives in important ways.

Sundial – the sun and moon influence our lives.

WHAT ARE CHILDREN LEARNING?

- Natural science – animals, birds, fish, reptiles, mini-beasts, humans, plants
- Physical sciences – properties of matter e.g. sand is different when wet or dry
- Low technology (whisk, scissors, paper)
- High technology – computers, mobile cell phones

Children learn about animals:

Where do animals live? You can find ants, spiders, birds etc. outside and look at their habitat, always returning them to their habitat and not harming them. Magnifying lenses might be helpful for looking at mini-beasts.

What do animals eat?

Cats? Dogs? Birds? Fish? Elephants?

How do they eat?

Claws, what sort of feet they have,

Mouth, a beak, types of teeth, jaws which chew (cows) jaws which gnash -dogs, cats, humans.

A bird that eats nuts needs a abeak that is a good nutcracker. A bird that eats fish needs a long beak.

How do animals protect themselves? Camouflage, claws, tusks, fur for warmth, oil on ducks to make them waterproof.

There are reasons why animals (including humans) birds, insects have developed as they have done.

Children learn about plants, trees and flowers

Why do plants of all kinds have leaves?

Why is a tree trunk like it is? Do All trees have the same trunks? Make bark rubbings, and see if you can put your arms around the tree trunk.

Why do flowers have colours? Bees are attracted to them, and pollinate the flowers.Insects are important on our planet.

Children learn low technology

Mixtures help children to learn about transforming something from one state to another.

Cooking, making bricks.

When cooking we use forks, egg whisks, tin openers, scissors, which are all examples of low technology.

Looking at **crafts** such as weaving, baskets and rug making, sewing, making paper.

The world of nature and the world of cultural heritage often come together.

This workshop links to 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' ELDA 6.

p.65 Children's worlds include their immediate physical surroundings (people, animals, vegetables and minerals of all kinds)'

Reading:

Bruce, T., Louis, S. McCall, G. (2015) Observing Young Children. London: Sage.

Bruce, T. (2015) Early Childhood Education. 5th edn. London: Hodder Education.