

Response to Sara Knight's Reflections Paper: ‘Can Forest School Act as a Spur to Better Quality Outdoor Experiences?’

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The article reminds me of my childhood experiences and how wonderful it was to be able to run and play outside without any worries. I simply cannot imagine how much more fun it would be to actually be outside in the woods in that lovely age!

The article makes readers realise what our children are missing and how important it is for us, as parents and practitioners, to understand and change our attitude towards outdoor play from being a merely ‘vent of energy’ time to a positive, exciting experience leading to sensory exploration and experimentation.

The article directs us to view how forest school experience can help raise confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences which, I believe, are the basic elements for the foundation of any future learning and development. The benefits clearly seem outstanding and holistic and, at the top, also environmentally friendly.

The author optimistically indicates how such experiences could be promoted and replicated even in small outdoor spaces. All we need is a bit of imagination and creativity and the will to get our hands dirty. The example of ‘Danish Gardens’ demonstrates how, for beginners, the elements of forest school-like play can be imported into settings, which gradually may lead to the development of proper Forest School experience.

I wonder if it would be possible to create any such shared spaces for local settings, especially the ones not familiar to forest schools. Bringing their

children into these shared spaces may give practitioners a flavour of the forest school experience and a baseline to put their plans into action.

Overall, I think the article sends out clear messages about how learning can be made into fun and enjoyable experiences and, at the same time, how we need to allow this innovative approach to be developed and enhanced within our current education system.