



Beyond Ecophobia



Lynn McNair, a fellow Froebelian in Edinburgh, put a quote on Twitter this week which got me thinking. The quote was:

"If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the earth before we ask them to save it".

The quote is from "Beyond Ecophobia" by David Sobel. Sobel is a senior faculty member in the education department at Antioch University in the US. He consults and speaks widely on child development and place-based education. I bought a copy of his book and reading his work really made me think about the way environmental issues are presented to young children. Sobel talks about developing empathy between young children and the natural world around them. What struck me about his ideas of how to do this was how well they resonated with the Froebelian approach Helen takes in Forest School sessions at Annan.

This might be pretending to be animals, making nests to be a bird in, being quiet in nature, connecting and learning about the natural flora and fauna and character of the local environment as well as gardening and caring for animals. *"We must begin in empathy, by becoming animals before we can save them".*

From seven years up Sobel says children should begin to explore the natural world, following streams, building dens, making boats, jumping across logs. *"Wet sneakers and muddy clothes are prerequisites for understanding the water cycle."*

Sobel argues that social action around saving the planet should begin around age twelve. He argues for "No tragedies before fourth grade". (Ages 9-10). By tragedies he means rainforest destruction as an environmental tragedy or a major oil spill. Children can deal with sad events in their own lives such as divorce or pets dying but need more emotional fortitude to deal with "the vastness of our ecological plight."

A thought provoking read. I thoroughly recommend it. **Debby.**

"What's important is that children have an opportunity to bond with the natural world, to learn to love it, before being asked to heal its wounds".



Beltane Celebrations

Sycamore Class have had a wonderful time in nature this week. At Forest School, they celebrated 'Beltane' and the coming of summer by creating their own Green Man tree sculptures. The children used clay as a base and then natural materials to make a face, the results were amazing, what great creations!





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Munchkinland is here!

The houses and buildings of Munchinland have well and truly taken over the hall this week. They are incredible!



Building Community

As Covid restrictions ease we are beginning to think about how we can start to rebuild our community spirit. As a first step we are happy to make mask wearing outside in the drive and car park optional. Mask wearing can make smiles and interaction very difficult between parents and parents and teachers. We do ask that everyone still observes social distancing rules.

If restrictions ease a little more in May we may be able to hold small get togethers for parents after half term. We hope that each class could run a Gathering on a Friday afternoon for parents to attend and then stay on for tea and cake.

Jumping the fire!

Learning to take safe risks and develop bravery have been part of Oak Trees forest school sessions this week. Here they are jumping the fire.



Clay in the garden.

Having the clay outside has piqued the interest of everyone in the kindergarten. Some children have enjoyed the sensory experience of holding, squeezey, rolling the clay, while others have made food to use in their role play. Creating flowers and animals has also been popular. Children also wrote letters to the woodland fairies and posted them by the entrance to the enchanted tree trunk.



Menu for next week:

Monday: Spanish omelette with veggies

Tuesday: Enchiladas with veggies

Wednesday: Dahl, rice, onion bhajis + mango chutney

Thursday: Pizza and veggies

Dates for your diary:

This week: Filming starts

Half Term: Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June

Last day of Summer Term: Thursday 8th July

First day of Autumn Term: Monday 6th September

Autumn Half Term: 25th to 29th October