

Outline the concept of holistic development.

What is meant by holistic development?

A holistic approach to child development attempts to address all aspects of a child's development and growth simultaneously. This leads to a better understanding of why a child behaves in a particular way. In order to achieve this it is important to create an open and free environment where children's natural intelligence is developed and encouraged; an environment that encourages natural curiosity and a love of nature; that encourages children to develop a sense of responsibility and to problem solve and ask questions. This is just the type of environment that is created by Forest School.

Using either the PILESS: (Physical, Intellectual, Language (i.e. communication), Emotional, Social and Spiritual) or SPICES (Social, Physical, Intellectual, Communication, Emotional and Spiritual) methodology when planning, can ensure that sessions support this holistic development.

How have you used this concept to promote balanced educational opportunities for your client group during a Forest School programme?

One of the main things I do consistently at the beginning of every session is gathering the children for the 'Name game'. I vary the activities for the name game to ensure that SPICES run throughout;

This list of 'Name game' activities promotes the SPICES below - instructions for creating a circle ('Sticky elbows', 'Sticky toes', 'Sticky knees') Saying names in turn, creating actions for names, memory game (say own name and person to left, then to right, then two people to right/left) throwing a ball to each other after calling a name, threading a rope around the circle, keeping a ball moving on a swinging rope, start the name again but in different directions, passing a snow ball, say name with eyes closed and hands joined and Pass the hoop over bodies in the closed circle etc.

Social – supporting others, working collaboratively and in a team, self-esteem, sharing and turn taking, understanding the difference between reality and imaginary play (able to have fun), decision making, negotiation, ability to cope with others and being patient.

Physical – movement, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, using different muscle groups.

Intellectual – Alliterating vocabulary, imagination, decision making, thinking skills, problem solving, and independence.

Communication – creative expression, decision making, eye contact when passing an object, listening skills, instructional vocabulary, non-verbal communication (hand squeezing).

Emotional – individual needs of each other respected, sense of achievement raises self-esteem, empathy and respect of others creative expression, excitement, perseverance, imagination, dealing with emotions. Ability to cope with others adapting their ideas.

Spiritual – beauty of nature - embracing the outdoors, individual points of view and belief, community ethos.