

Nordic countries, including Iceland, encourage regular outdoor activities for children. A Government report found children benefit from outdoor exposure. The curriculum guidelines emphasised the importance of utilising the outdoors as a learning environment to allow children to engage in Nature, participate in regular exercise and instil a healthy lifestyle (Norodahl and Johannesson, 2013).

Icelandic children aged between one and six have long since participated in daily outdoor activities. However, findings suggest that children aged six to sixteen only partake in outdoor activities on their own free time. Little information is known regarding methods used by teachers for outdoor learning, although it is expected to vary between schools and individual teachers within each school. In Iceland there are indications of an increased use of outdoor learning. The capital, Reykjavik, stated seventy percent of schools participate in outdoor learning on a regular basis (Oladottir, 2008).

Reference List.

Noradahl, K. and Johannesson, I. (2014) 'Icelandic teachers' views of using the outdoors' *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*. Vol 44, No. 4, September 2014, 391-406.

Oladottir, H. (2008). *Arsskyrsla 2008* [Annual Report 2008]. Reykjavik: Natturuskoli Reykjavíkur.

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This essay will focus on Forest Schools. The Forest School Network have devised a definition for Forest Schools as:

It is an inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands on learning experiences in a woodland environment (O'Brien and Murray, 2006).

Due to the range of indoor activities available today, O'Brien and Murray (2006) believe that fewer school children are having the opportunity to experience green spaces and woodlands, as their parents may have, due to safety concerns associated. Research shows that children who are not exposed to nature are unlikely to become adults who venture outdoors, and unfortunately not gain from the physical and emotional benefits (Ward-Thompson *et al.* 2004). Due to the contrast between classroom and outdoor learning environments, the Welsh Assembly Government are urging teachers to set up their own Forest Schools, in particular, the foundation phase (WAG, 2009).

Reference List

O'Brien, E. and Murray, R. (2006) *A marvellous opportunity for children to learn: A participatory evaluation of Forest School in England and Wales*. Farnham: Forest Research.

Ward-Thompson, C., Aspinall, P., Bell, S., Findlay, C., Wherrett, J. and Travlou, P. (2004) *Open space and social inclusion: Local woodland use in central Scotland*. Edinburgh: Report to the Forestry Commission.

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