

## Slide 2

The main objectives of our presentation are to explore;

- The key benefits of outdoor learning
- The importance of outdoor learning

## Slide 3

The diagram shows different aspects of outdoor learning;

- Outdoor learning is education that is conducted outside of a classroom enabling children to experience the natural world (Institute for Outdoor Learning, 2018).

## Slide 5

Outdoor Classroom Day (2018) quoted “Outdoors is where children can most be themselves. There’s something about open outdoor spaces, where there are fewer rules and restrictions, that is exciting for them – a form of escapism. The sense of freedom gained from playing outside and running without limits, brings a happiness that is hard to rival” which nicely illustrates the benefits further.

## Slide 6

We have identified the importance of outdoor learning, throughout primary education:

- The Outdoor environment is a multi-sensory place for babies and children to explore and play, offering a chance to investigate their surroundings as well as being an active and fun way of learning (NCT (National Childbirth Trust), 2017).

## Slide 12

- Physical Education also known as PE is part of the national curriculum in schools. Departmental guidance recommends children of all ages are offered a minimum of 2 hours of physical activity a week (Department of Education, n.d).
- Teachers are expected to use a variety of different settings to teach their PE lessons; indoors, outdoors and outside the classroom. It was said that the muddy pitches in December were as much a teaching tool as a centrally

heated hall, the same cooperation, respect and listening applied regardless of the environment (Waite, 2011).

- It is believed "that physical education was the first curriculum area to realise the value of learning 'outdoors' and/or outside the classroom'" (Waite, 2011).
- Physical Education aids in the development of not only a child's physical capacity but also their; cognitive, social and emotional capacities. Playing a vital role for children in early years, developing their movement skills (Waite, 2011).
- It has seen to have many health benefits, as well as having a positive effect on mental well-being. It helps to promote a healthy lifestyle at a young age, encouraging children to keep fit and eat well, minimizing their chances of becoming obese in their adult lives (Sports England, n.d).
- According to the University of Aberdeen (2010) PE helps to improve attention in the classroom setting, as it not only provides children with the opportunity to 'let off steam' but also heightens brain function enabling children to concentrate on their work.
- Many different activities are taught during a PE lesson, which can vary depending on season.
- Under The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)(1995), schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments ensuring all students have equal opportunities and have the same access to the curriculum subjects (Training and Development Agency for Schools, n.d.).

### Slide 13

Activities in PE could include:

- Team sports such as ..... these can improve social interaction and collaboration skills.
- Other sports like .... can promote independence and creativity.
- Swimming however is a compulsory part of Physical education and by the end of key stage 2, children have to prove they are confident in and around water. Teachers are able to access this through observations (GOV.UK 2014).

- Each activity allows children to widen their knowledge and skills, including the use of new equipment, learning the rules and boundaries of each sport.

#### Slide 14

- Bruner's theories evolved throughout his life, however, are all still relevant in education today (Aubrey, K and Riley, A. 2019).
- Bruner developed the spiral curriculum which was based on cognitive theory. The spiral curriculum was centered upon the belief that children could be taught any subject at any stage in their life, as long as it was structured and presented appropriately. The key features consider that knowledge is refreshable and revisiting a certain topic will enable further development (Johnston, 2012).
- An example of this is a child in foundation phase learning to throw a ball, through revisiting the activity, by key stage 2 the child will have learnt a variety of techniques to throw the ball and become more accurate.
- Bruner believed children work together to construct answers if unable to on their own (Miller, L and Pound, L, 2011).
- In PE this is relevant to working within a team, being able to identify and learn from their peer's strengths and weaknesses enables children to succeed, not only in a group but also individually.
- There were 3 modes in which Bruner believed children developed their experiences into learning:
  - Enactive, this is where children do things for themselves. This is relevant as children learn how to get themselves undressed and dressed into their PE kit.
  - Iconic, where they recognise images, pictures and numbers. This could be something as simple as counting how many beanbags they have collected during an obstacle race.
  - and Symbolic, when children are able to understand abstraction, language and reasoning. When children are able to understand the rules of the game (Aubrey, K and Riley A, 2019).
- Finally, Bruner believed children learnt through problem solving, and discovery learning. Instead of being told something, children would construct

their own knowledge through doing. In PE this can be seen through cooperation game, where children have to work together in order to complete the task ([Mcleod 2019](#)).

Vicky is now going to discuss Forest Schools...

#### Slide 19

- Montessori's theory is still relevant in current education, she believed that children learn best when they have access to a hands-on-learning environment (City Garden Montessori school, n.d).
- Montessori supported the use of the outdoor environment for a child's learning, with a view of the outdoors being a natural addition to the indoors. She urged teachers and children "to take the indoor environment out and the outdoor environment in" providing a variety of activities, enabling children to have the freedom to explore in the outdoor spaces (Montessori, cited in Isaacs, 2016).
- An example of how Montessori's theory is used in current practice could be the use of the school garden, where children can participate in growing their own vegetables and are able to see and consume the final products, giving them a sense of accomplishment (Harrington Russell, 2014).

#### Slide 22

- The outdoor environment has many benefits on health and well-being. According to Ward Thompson et al. (2008:132), children with little access to the outdoor environments were unlikely to use green spaces as an adult, which could have a negative impact on their health and well-being. (cited in Waite, 2011).
- Biological and medical researchers have found that physical activity in the outdoor environment has a positive impact on overall health. It can help to maintain healthy blood pressure levels, as well as cholesterol levels.
- There has also been research that suggests children who spend more time in the outdoor environment are more likely to develop their immune systems, meaning they are less likely to be absent from school due to illnesses.

- The outdoor environment also has a positive impact on psychological health, with a belief that the outdoors can help to relieve negative moods, as well as boosting attention (Munoz, n.d).

### Slide 23

There are four aspects of well-being: mental, emotional, social and physical. They can all be developed by engaging in a positive, safe and caring environment (Education.gov.scot, n.d).

- Mental well-being – 1 in 10 children ages 5-16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder (Council for learning Outside the classroom, n.d).

The outdoor environment helps relieve stress and anxiety as it reduces hormone cortisol levels in the brain.

According to a study by Sheffield Hallam University, there is a clear link between outdoor participation in activities with improving mental health. Children benefit from the exposure of natural sunlight, as this aids in their bodies producing Vitamin D, which releases serotonin. Healthy levels of these are needed for a child's mental health and development (Outdoor Classroom Day, 2018).

- Emotional well-being- Fresh air and the freedom of being outside has a positive impact on a child. It provides them with the opportunity to embrace the natural world independently, whilst giving them time to relax and take a break from their busy lives which in turn enables them to clear their heads, supporting their emotional well-being (Outdoor classroom day, 2018).
- Social well-being– Different outdoor environments offers children the experience to work with their peers, building relationships. According to Moore (1996) children who play together within nature were more likely to build positive feelings for one another, which in turn has a positive impact on social wellbeing (Moore, 1996 cited in Munoz, n.d).
- Physical well-being – 30 percent of children are classed as overweight or obese in England. The outdoor environment can play a vital part in ensuring that children stay a healthy weight, improving the strength of their bones, muscles and joints, as well as developing their motor skills and their cardiovascular systems. By being active, this promotes a healthy lifestyle, which in turn can influence children to take control of what they are eating (Education business, n.d).

Health and well-being are important for all children, including children with special educational needs. Vicky will be discussing how the outdoor environment can impact children with special educational needs.

#### Slide 26

Some of the parents negative attitudes include;

- The fear of injury - It is a concern for parents that there are more risks in the outdoor environment. They believe children are more likely to hurt or injure themselves as there are less boundaries and supervision.
- Parents also fearing for their child's safety. Due to the extensive media coverage of child abductions or attacks, parents are concerned this could happen to their own children.
- Relying on transport. Children are often driven to school, or catch a school bus instead of walking due to the lack of time and other priorities their parents have. Parents have less time to spend with their children these days, due to longer working hours and other commitments (Bilton, 2010).

#### Slide 28

- In Key Stage 2, outdoor learning follows a more structured approach and is used as an extension to the classroom.
- We have discussed in detail how playgrounds, physical education and Forest Schools each have an impact on a child's learning, including the enhancement of knowledge and skills.

#### Reference List:

Aubrey, K and Riley, A. (2019). *Understanding and Using Educational theories*. London: Sage Publication, pp.120.

Bilton, H. (2010). *Outdoor Learning in the Early Years*. Oxon: Routledge.

City Garden Montessori school. (n.d.). *The Montessori Theory of Development*. Available at: <https://www.citygardenschool.org/about/strategic-framework/the-montessori-theory-of-development/> [Accessed 3 Jan. 2020].

Council for Learning outside the classroom. (n.d.). *Health and Well-being*. Available at: <https://www.lotc.org.uk/what-is-lotc/health-and-well-being/> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2020].

Department of Education. (n.d.). *Statutory curriculum*. Available at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/statutory-curriculum> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].

Education Business. (n.d.). *The outdoor learning approach to health and well-being*. Available at: <http://www.educationbusinessuk.net/features/outdoor-learning-approach-health-and-well-being> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2020].

Education.gov.scot. (n.d.). *Curriculum for excellence: health and wellbeing*. Available at: <https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/hwb24-ol-healthandwellbeing.pdf> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2020].

GOV.UK. (2014). *PE and sport premium for primary schools*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools#about-the-pe-and-sport-premium> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].

Harrington Russell, M. (2014). *Connecting Children to Nature in a Montessori Primary Environment*. University of Wisconsin. Available at: <https://minds.wisconsin.edu/bitstream/handle/1793/69013/MaureenHarringtonRussell.pdf?sequence=1> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2020].

Institute for Outdoor Learning. (2018). *What is Outdoor Learning*. Available at: <https://www.outdoor-learning.org/Good-Practice/Research-Resources/About-Outdoor-Learning> [Accessed 29 Dec. 2019].

Johnston, H. (2012). *The Spiral Curriculum. Research into Practice*. Eric.ed.gov. Available at: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED538282> [Accessed 3 Jan. 2020].

Mcleod, S. (2019). *Bruner - Learning Theory in Education*. Simply psychology. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/bruner.html> [Accessed 3 Jan. 2020].

Miller, L and Pound, L. (2011). *Theories and Approaches to Learning in the Early Years*. London: Sage Publications.

Munoz, S. (n.d.). *Children in the Outdoors*. Ltl.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.ltl.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/children-in-the-outdoors.pdf> [Accessed 5 Jan. 2020].

NCT (National Childbirth Trust). (2017). *The benefits of outdoor play for children*. Available at: <https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/games-and-play/benefits-outdoor-play-for-children> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].

Outdoor Classroom Day. (2018). *Five reasons going outdoors improves children's mental health and wellbeing*. Available at: <https://outdoorclassroomday.com/2018/03/19/five-reasons-going-outdoors-improves-childrens-mental-health-and-wellbeing/> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2020].

Sports England. (n.d.). *Sport and health*. Available at: <https://www.sportengland.org/research/benefits-of-sport/health-and-benefits-of-sport/> [Accessed 12 Jan. 2020].

Training and Development Agency for Schools. (n.d.). *Including pupils with SEN and/or disabilities in primary physical education*. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/13804/1/physicaleducationpe.pdf> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].

University of Aberdeen. (2010). *Exercise in schools can help children pay attention in the classroom*. Available at: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/news/3600/> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2020].

Waite, S. (2011). *Children learning outside the classroom*. London: Sage Publications, pp.134-135.

Wood, K. (2011). *Education the basics*. Oxon: Routledge.