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JIGSAW Education Group

Nature and Wellbeing

activity pack

EYFS and KS1

Forestry England and **Jigsaw Education Group** have come together to create a fun and hands-on set of activities that will help children to connect with nature, while learning simple techniques to support their mental and physical wellbeing.



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Welcome to this

Nature and Wellbeing

activity pack

Outdoor play gives young children the time and space they need to explore, experiment and feel good in their bodies and minds.

This pack supports practitioners to nurture children's wellbeing using the five different pathways to nature connection. Guiding them from sensory exploration to caring for living things and seeing themselves as part of the natural world.

Whether in gardens, playgrounds, parks or woodland spaces, children are invited to explore freely, strengthening physical development, communication, friendships and emotional wellbeing.

Hello, I'm Jigsaw Jerrie Cat and I'm here with my Jigsaw Friends!

We offer tips, questions and ideas to help children to explore nature and understand their feelings as they go.



Time in nature

Pause, notice and be present in the natural world

Beauty

Take time to notice beauty with our **move like nature activity**, **follow the leader** and **nature statue games**.

Meaning

Have fun with our **ready, steady, nature game** and take time to reflect and observe how you are feeling after each activity.

Connect

Use your senses with our **noticing nature activity sheet** and **I spy nature**.

Emotion

Take a moment to enjoy the natural world with our **nature buddy activity**.

Compassion

Continue further nature connection with our take home **nature and wellbeing cards**.

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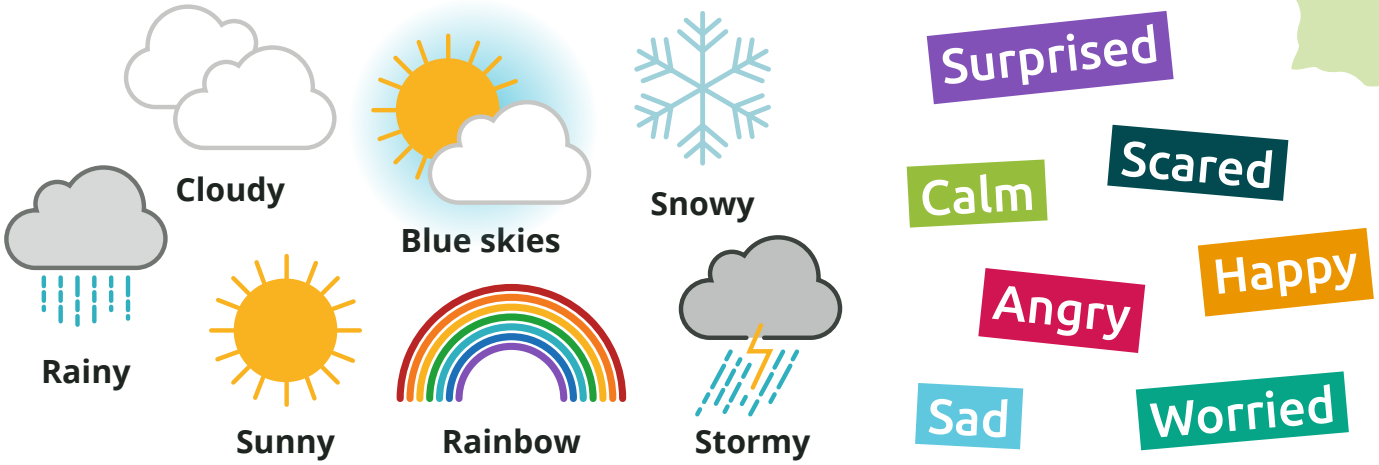
We have suggested 13 activities that you can adapt for your group with ideas on how to build in reflection time and extend the activities further. At the back of the pack you will find a set of **nature and wellbeing card** templates for the children to carry with them and add to them every day.

The activities are suitable for children aged 3-7 years (EYFS and KS1) and can be adapted for different ages or needs. For more ideas you may wish to refer to our **Nature and Wellbeing activity pack** aimed at Key Stage 2.

Getting started

We recommend taking time at the start and end of each activity to encourage children to check in and notice how they are feeling.

Using the weather as a metaphor is a friendly way to describe their mood and think about what might help them feel their best. Invite the children to mix and match the weather symbols and words to reflect how they are feeling. For example, sunny and happy, a bit cloudy and worried.



Reflection

Encourage children to reflect on the activities and notice if spending time outside helps them feel calmer or more relaxed. Remind them if they are ever feeling a little cloudy or rainy, doing something they love might brighten their mood.

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Noticing nature

Spending time outside and actively connecting with nature has been shown to be good for our health and wellbeing.

You will need

- Nature spotter sheet
- Pencils

What can you notice outside?

1. Take a moment to slow down and head outside.
2. Encourage the children to look at what's around them.
3. Then use our spotter sheet to help children explore the outside area.

Grounding techniques

Help children to focus on their senses so they feel more settled and present.



Reflection

At the end of the activity take a moment to be still again and reflect upon physical and emotional feelings. Ask the children to take a breath.

What do they notice about how they are feeling now?

Take it further

I felt... I heard... I saw... I smelt...

1. **'I spy' with my senses.**

   After spending time outside in nature, ask the children to come up with an answer to the following:

2. **Ready, Steady, Nature!**

- Set up four clearly marked areas in an outside space to represent: Yes, No, Maybe and Not sure.
- Ask the children to move around the space, then read out a statement linked to nature, for example:'Trees are important', 'animals need our help', 'spiders are helpful'.
- Then call out 'Ready... Steady... Nature!' Children move quickly to the area that matches what they think or feel.
- Invite children to explain why they decided to go to that area.

Select statements that help children think about what matters to them in nature.



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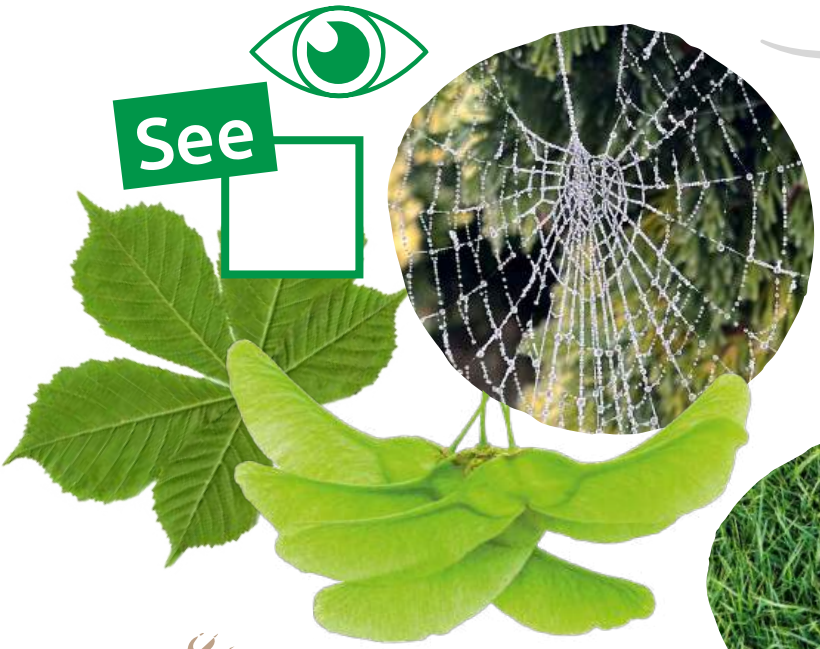
Nature spotter sheet

Find something you can...



Hear



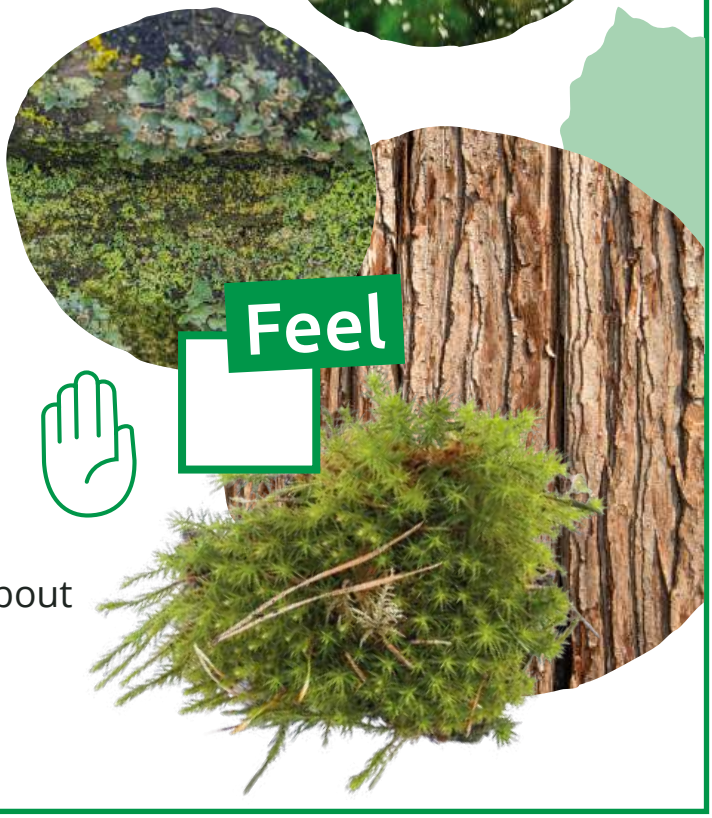
See



Smell

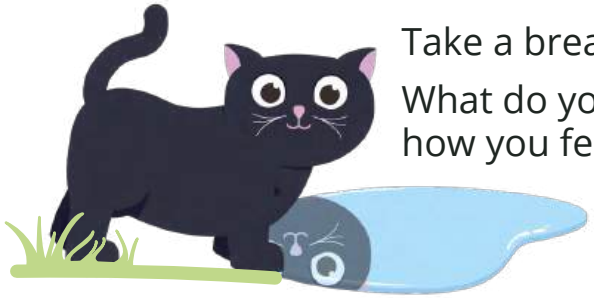


Evidence that wildlife is present



Feel

Reflection



Take a breath.

What do you notice about how you feel now?

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Move like nature

Moving our bodies in a mindful way in a natural setting can support our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

Spending time outdoors in nature has been shown to boost our immune systems, lower stress levels and help us feel calm and relaxed.

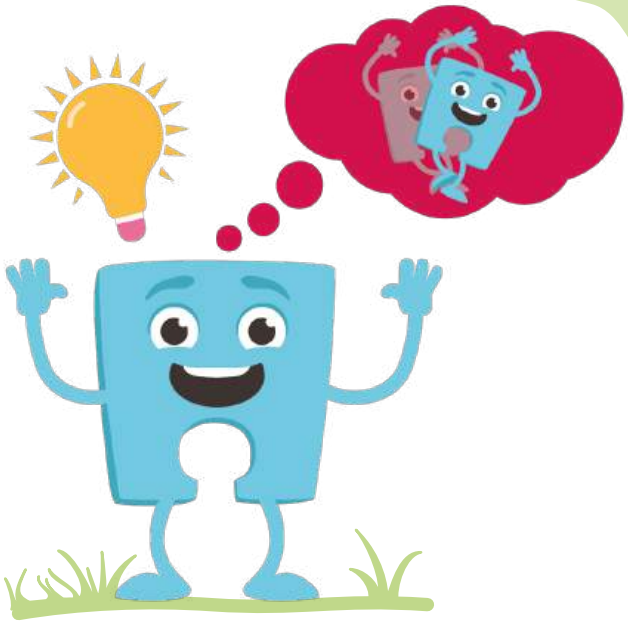
When we pay attention to how we move, as well as what we move, we can build important skills such as balance, control and focus.

Finding even a few moments each day to move mindfully benefits adults and children. For school-aged children, regular physical activity can support co-ordination, improve health and fitness, boost mood and sleep and even performance at school.

This activity uses nature to help explore movement in fun and imaginative ways.

You will need

- Outside space
- Movement cards



Can you move like nature?

1. **Find a clear space outdoors.**
2. **Let's get moving!**

   Use the mindful movement cards to act as prompts to move like nature!
3. **Hold each movement** - for a few seconds, or as long as it feels comfortable.
4. **Explore movement** - one at a time or work together to link several movements into a flowing sequence.
5. **Encourage mindfulness** – when holding the poses encourage the children to take slow breaths and notice how their bodies feel like moving today – slow, fast, big or small?



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Reflection

After moving ask the children:

- How does their body feel now?
- Which movement did they like best?



Take it further

1. **Print out the nature themed movement cards.**

   Invite children to choose their favourite and have a go at making their own animal pose.

2. **Follow me!**

   Stand in a circle and ask one child to move and strike a pose inspired by nature. Everyone copies, responding as the movements are made. Go around the circle so everyone has a chance to show their favourite nature inspired pose.

3. **Nature statues.**

   This game encourages a playful way to move, listen and build a connection with nature.

- Within an agreed space ask the children to run around and listen out for when you call something that can be found in nature. They then have to stop running and be a statue, using their body to express that animal or plant.
- You can use the poses the children have been practising to see if they can remember them and make some of your own. Here are some to get you started:

A frog ready to jump

A tall tree

A sleeping hedgehog

Did you know?

Playing outdoors is a great way to be active and explore nature, which can help your body and mind feel calm and relaxed.



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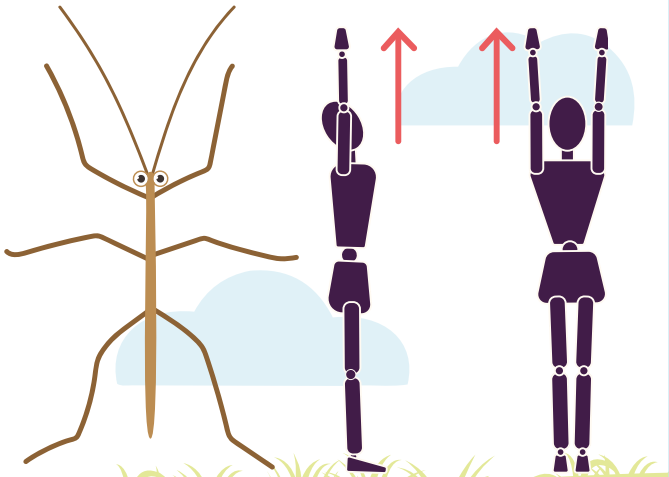
Nature themed movement cards

Stretch up tall like... a stick insect

Stand with your feet together and reach your arms up high.

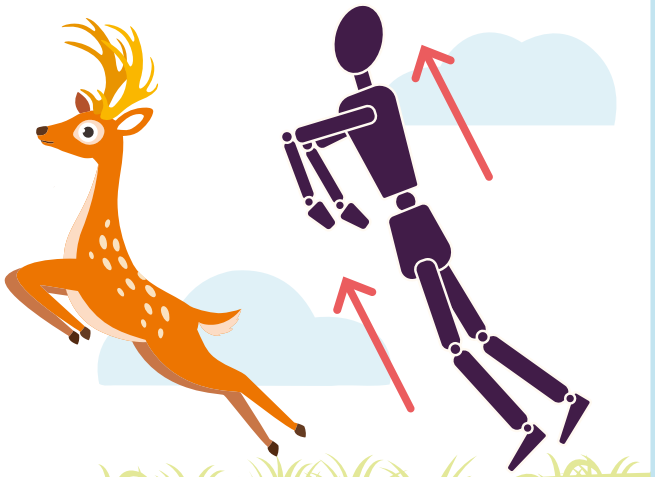
Make yourself as long as you can be.



Jump like... a deer

Bend your knees and push gently off the ground.

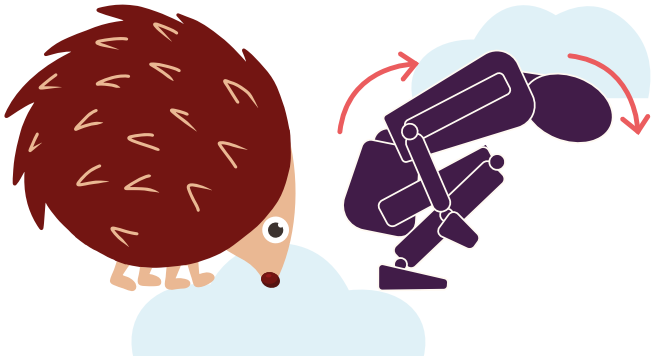
Land softly and pause like you are listening carefully.



Curl up like... a hedgehog

Crouch down to the ground and curl up into a small ball.

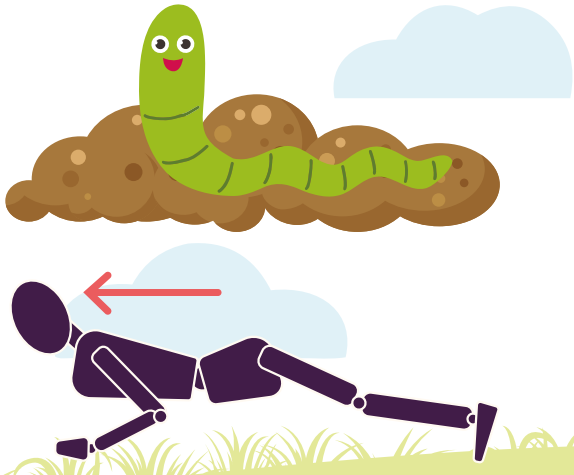
Hug your knees and tuck your head in.



Wiggle like... a worm in the soil

Stand with your legs together and your arms by your side.

Wiggle and twist your body like a worm in the soil. If the ground is dry, you could try this lying on a soft surface.



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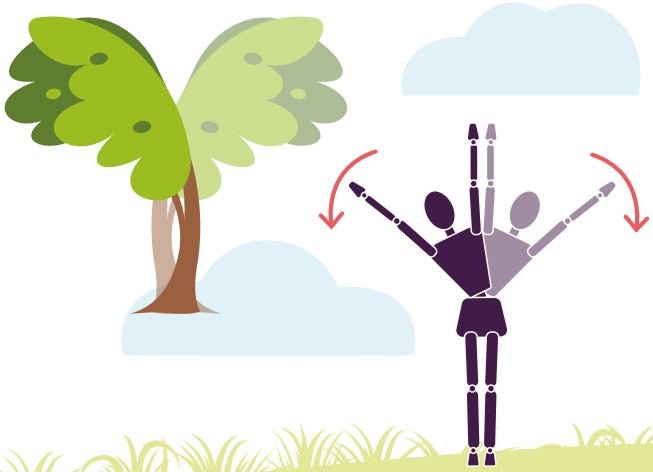
Nature themed movement cards

Sway side to side like... a tree in the wind

Stand with your legs hip width apart. Put your arms up like branches.

Move the top part of your body gently from side to side. Like a tree swaying in the wind.



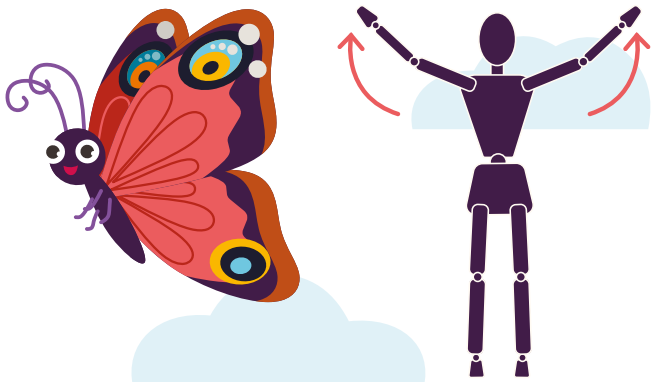
Turn your head like... a snail peeking out of its shell

Sitting down, slowly turn your head to one side, then back to the middle like a snail turning its head.



Flutter like... a butterfly

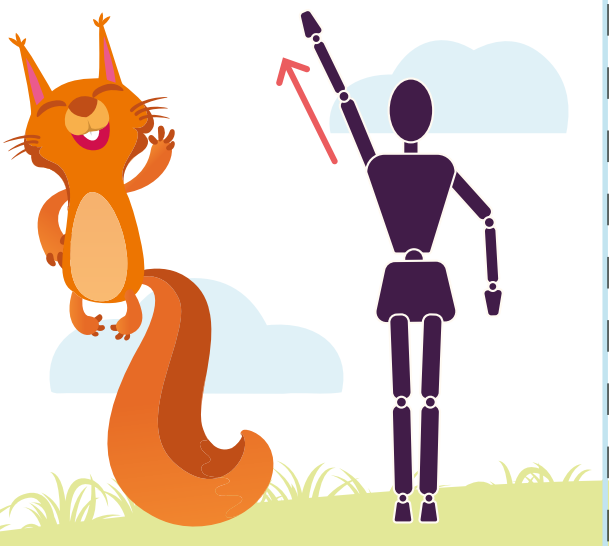
Lift your arms up and down like wings as you gently turn from side to side.



Reach up like... a squirrel

Stretch one arm high into the air, then lower it slowly.

Swap arms and reach again as if you are pulling a nut from a tree.



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Nature buddy

You will need

- Outdoor space
- Sitting mats (optional)

Spending time in nature helps us feel calm, happy and connected. When we care for a tree, plant or special spot, we notice more, relax more, and feel proud of looking after the world around us.

Nature gives us fresh air and beauty — and when we care for it, we give something back.

This activity requires regular visits to an outdoor space ideally with trees/plants. It can be your school grounds, your local park or community garden.

Once the children have experienced this activity you can encourage them to repeat it in their own time and find a nature buddy at or near their home, or somewhere they pass on their way to school.

Visit 1

Ask the children to pick a tree, plant or space to become their buddy.

- Can they think of three words to describe their buddy?
- What does it need to stay healthy?
- Explain that they will visit their buddy regularly, for example weekly, to help look after it and see how it changes.

Visit 2

Can they think of ways they can look after their buddy?

- Keep the area clean, tidy and litter free.
- Water it in summer.

Visit 3

Ask the children to sit or stand quietly by their nature buddy. Encourage them to use their senses.

- What can they hear, see or smell today?
- Is the air warm, cool or breezy?

Visit 4

Ask the children what they notice about their buddy?

- Has it changed from the last visit?



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Reflection

Ask the children how they feel when they visit their nature buddy.

Are they excited to see what it will look like at each visit? How do they feel when they sit next to it? How do they feel as they care for it?



Here are some words children may use to describe how they are feeling.

Calm

Kind

Happy

Concerned

Excited

Take it further

Hibernating hedgehog – Shhh!

As well as looking after plants and animals we can help nature in other ways too.

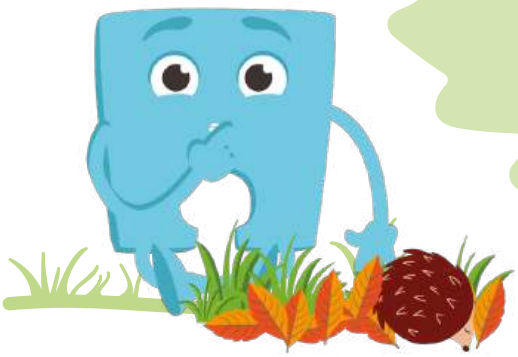
The forest is home to many creatures, and just as we wouldn't want someone disturbing our home, we should avoid upsetting wildlife, especially when animals have babies or are hibernating.

- Ask the children to sit in a circle to create the "forest." Choose one child to be the hibernating hedgehog, curled up with eyes closed.
- In pairs, ask the children to try and walk quietly from one side of the circle to the other. Invite the children to think about placing their feet gently and keeping their bodies slow and controlled.
- If the hedgehog hears a noise loud enough to "wake" them, they point to where it came from. If they correctly point to a pair, that pair is out and another tries. If a pair crosses quietly without waking the hedgehog, one of them becomes the next hedgehog.

Explain to the children that whenever they go for a walk in nature, they are much likely to see animals if they are quiet.

Invite the children to pause and notice how their bodies feel after moving quietly.





Nature and wellbeing cards

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Nature and wellbeing cards



Name:

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How are you feeling today?

Stormy

Snowy

Sunny

Rainy

Blue skies

Rainbow

Cloudy

Angry

Calm

Sad

Happy

Surprised

Scared

Worried

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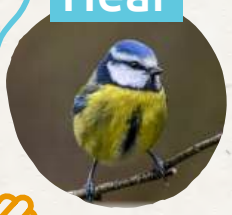
Noticing nature

Find something you can...

See



Hear



Feel



Smell



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What colours can you find outside?



Yellow



Blue



Red



Green



Black

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Counting to 10 in nature...

Can you...

Point to 10 leaves

Listen to 10 sounds

Hop like a rabbit 10 times

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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Move like nature



Wiggle like a worm





Flutter like a butterfly

Curl up like a hedgehog

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My favourite thing to do outside is...



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Make a tree bark rubbing

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Resources

Research demonstrates outdoor learning and regular physical activity are vital for children's wellbeing. **The Mental Health Foundation (2024)** highlights that nature supports emotional, psychological and physical health. Physical activity is also one of the NHS's **five ways to wellbeing** (NHS, 2025) and both the NHS (NHS, 2024) and World Health Organisation **recommend daily movement for children** to support their physical and mental health.

Discover more about **nature connection** and related resource ideas.

YOUNGMINDS offer help and advice for those working with children and young people.

Children's mental health week provide ideas and inspiration for activities to support children with their mental health.

Forestry England

Forestry England manages more land and trees than any other organisation in the country, caring for the nation's forests for now and future generations. Guided by its Growing the Future plan (2026 - 2031), it focuses on sustainable management, timber and high-quality recreation, supported by a national learning strategy that builds children's connection to nature.

Forestry England aims for every child in England to benefit from educational experiences in the nation's forests.

forestryengland.uk/learning

JIGSAW Education Group

Jigsaw Education Group supports over 6,500 schools worldwide with evidence-based PSHE, RE and wellbeing programmes, combining education with psychology and neuroscience. Its whole-school approach builds emotional literacy, social skills and mental wellbeing, with mindfulness at its core.

The Jigsaw Outdoors Programme extends this through meaningful outdoor learning for ages 3–11, linked to the PSHE curriculum and RSHE guidance, helping children explore nature, respect the environment, and connect physical activity with wellbeing and personal growth.

jigsaweducationgroup.com/programmes/pshe-3-11/