

ACTIVITY 1

Learn to Love Nature I

Cultivating relationships with nature is a precursor to developing an ecological consciousness. This sets students up for a greater understanding of the need to care for the environment and has social, educational and health outcomes.

Science ACSIS01 | Participate in guided investigations and make observations using the senses

Science ACSIS233 Engage in discussions about observations and represent ideas

Sustainability OI.1, OI.2, OI.3, OI.7 The biosphere is a dynamic system, all life forms are connected, and actions for a sustainable future require respect and responsibility

You will need

- Access to an outdoor area of bushland, or an area within or close to the school with a few trees or some natural features
- The children need to be dressed adequately for being outside e.g. with warm clothing and/or sun protection
- Tarpaulin to sit on
- First aid kit

Preparation before the activity

Before the activity, take a walk to the bushland or natural area, observing what the children might find there when you visit as a class. Study the animals, birds and invertebrates that might be found in that area. Identify the boundaries of the exercise, within which the children can play.

Method

Take the children to the outdoor area. Ask them to sit quietly on the ground nearby or on the tarpaulin. Then ask them to feel the natural world around them for a minute, listen to the sounds, feel the breeze on their faces, smell the air – and make any other observations about nature in that place. Ask them to notice things around them, such as puddles, shrubs in flower.

Allow the children to play in the space for around fifteen minutes, first describing the boundaries within which they can play, such as not past the big tree, the fallen log etc. While playing, ask them to have a look around and notice one feature in the area such as a certain tree or a protruding rock.

Then sit the children down again and give some of them the opportunity to describe their feature to the class, without looking at it or revealing exactly what it is. The other students will need to guess what the feature is.

Ask the children if they can see anything that makes them think that there are animals who live, or who have lived, in that space. Did anyone see an animal such as an insect or bird? Or find any evidence of animals, such as cocoons, feathers, bones, footprints, fur, scats. Do any of the children know which animals might have been active in this area last night?

If there is time, the children can play some more.



Photo courtesy of Helen Cunningham