

Teach it Outside



Outdoor activities for well being

This outdoor activity pack contains 25 fun activities to do with your children during the holidays in a local park or your garden.

Originally written for use in schools when children returned from lockdown to help them engage with each other and their teachers, we've found that they're great to do anywhere, whether in the classroom or at home for the holidays.

This pack of activities for children is based on the NHS and Mind's Five Ways to Wellbeing. It offers 25 outdoor learning activities ranging from 10 minutes to full lessons to help both parents and teachers alike support children in deepening their connection with their own wellbeing and adapting back to learning environments.

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The Five Ways to Wellbeing are a set of evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population.

This pack has five outdoor sessions written around each theme and are tailored to be applicable to any key stage. The themes are:

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Five Ways to Wellbeing



Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages. *(Five Ways to Wellbeing, MIND)*

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – connect – emotion pot

This activity can be done in small groups or as a whole class. It is a great activity to develop an emotional vocabulary, helps children to connect and helps with self-regulation.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Connect: To support children to build connections. To develop awareness of own feelings and those of others. To explore coping strategies.

Lesson time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: A clear plastic container containing water, access to natural materials.

Instructions:

1. Ask everyone to think of a happy emotion for younger children this can just be happiness, for older it could be confidence, strength, resilience etc.
2. Ask the children to find a small object that represents this feeling and put it in the pot.
3. When everyone has put their happy feeling in the pot, ask them to think of a non-happy feeling this could be sadness, anger, frustration etc.
4. Ask the children to find a small object that represents this feeling and put it in the pot.
5. The pot is now full of a range of different emotions.
6. Explain that the pot is like their brain full of all their emotions.
7. Discuss some of the things which could shake up the pot, positive and negative, for example during the morning routine. Shake the pot to stir up the emotions inside.
8. Explain that this can happen with good things and bad – e.g. excitement stirs things up, so does being tired.
9. What can we do to help the pot settle? What can we do to help others if their pot is all mixed up? Time without any more disturbance is the best thing!

Health and Safety

Use general guidelines for working with natural materials.

If children are collecting remind them to be aware of what they are picking up and that they are only allowed to use natural materials that are on the ground. They must not take living plants or leaves without permission.

Daisies and dandelions are fine to be picked.

Rules for children

Wash hands after the activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – connect – mirror mirror

A simple activity that encourages children to connect with a partner by copying their actions. Rotate the pairings regularly to encourage class cohesion.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Connect: To support children to build connections. To develop awareness of own feelings and those of others. To explore coping strategies.

Lesson time: 10+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: A whistle.

Instructions:

1. Pair up the class.
2. Give everyone a number.
3. Odd numbers are the mirror, even numbers are the person. Adapt as necessary for younger children.
4. Shout out an instruction for the person to do in front of their mirror e.g. brushing teeth, getting dressed, doing a dance etc.
5. On the blow of the whistle, they swop and the mirror becomes the person and vice versa.
6. Blow your whistle again and all even numbers have to find a new mirror.
7. Shout out another activity.

Health and Safety

None.

Rules for children

Watch what the other person is doing carefully and copy it exactly.
Be kind.

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5 Steps to wellbeing – connect – when I ...

A circle game that gives everyone an opportunity to express how they are or were feeling. It allows for nonverbal communication and connection for quieter members of the class.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Connect: To support children to build connections. To develop awareness of own feelings and those of others. To explore coping strategies.

Lesson time: 10+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: None needed.

Instructions:

1. Ask everyone to stand in a circle.
2. Ask children to remember waking up. How did they feel?
3. Go round the circle, everyone says "When I woke up this morning I felt..."
4. Quieter children are given the option to use facial expressions to express how they felt.
5. When everyone has completed this, the activity can be extended to incorporate other events. E.g. When I came back to school I felt, When we were in lockdown I felt... etc.
6. Reflect on the results.

Health and Safety

None.

Rules for children

Be respectful of others and listen to answers.
Be kind.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – connect – catch up

Children have an opportunity to gather in small groups and chat. Adults are to hover around to encourage conversation if it is slowing down.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Connect: To support children to build connections. To develop awareness of own feelings and those of others. To explore coping strategies.

Lesson time: 10+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: None needed.

Instructions:

1. Split the class into small groups 4 or 5 in a group.
2. Spread the groups around the playground to offer a sense of privacy.
3. Encourage the groups to talk – starting points could be lockdown, being back in school, favourite pets, brothers and sisters etc.
4. Encourage children to ask questions to the others in their group.
5. Wander around the groups and ensure the children are talking to each other, where conversations are struggling help by offering a new topic or asking a few questions to get it going again.

Health and Safety

None.

Rules for children

Ask questions to find out as much as you can about the other people's experiences of the topic you are discussing.
Be respectful of others and listen to answers.
Be kind.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – connect – stop go

Children work together across the playground following silent physical cues stop and start. Requires concentration and focus on the group moving as one.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Connect: To support children to build connections. To develop awareness of own feelings and those of others. To explore coping strategies.

Lesson time: 10+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: None needed.

Instructions:

1. The class move around the space stopping and starting as one.
2. Explain that if one person stops, they all have to stop. If one person starts, to move they all have to move.
3. No-one is to speak and anyone can start or stop, the trick is to always watch out for what everyone else is doing.
4. After a few times the group will start to attune and begin to stop/start almost as one.

Health and Safety

Minor risk of falling/tripping when moving around.
Risk of banging into each other.

Rules for children

Be mindful of others as you are moving around.
The aim is for everyone to start and stop at exactly the same time without speaking and without anyone leading.
Wash hands.

Teach it Outside

Five Ways to Wellbeing



Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise. (www.mind.org.uk)

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5 Steps to wellbeing – be active – opposites challenge

A deceptively tricky activity that keeps minds as well as bodies active. Younger children will find it difficult so stick to one or two instructions, older children can handle more complicated instructions.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Be active: Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Lesson time: 10+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: None needed.

Instructions:

1. Explain to the class you are going to give them simple instructions to follow.
2. Give out simple order orders to start stop and go, forward and back.
3. Shout out the instructions and when everyone is following them explain you now want them to do the opposite of whatever you shout, so stop becomes go and forwards becomes backwards.
4. If they can manage this well introduce other instructions, fast, slow, left right, tall, small, walk, run etc.
5. Older children can have more than instruction at a time e.g. stop forward quickly!

Health and Safety

Risk of falling/tripping when running.

Risk of banging into each other.

Rules for children

Be mindful of others as you are running around.

Wash hands.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – be active – scavenger hunt

Children work together in their teams to collect a variety of materials and return them to their hoop. The trick to this simple activity is that they have to work as a team to choose what goes in their hoop. Younger age groups will find this tricky and you will end up with more than one of some items!

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Be active: Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Lesson time: 15+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: 4 hoops, whistle, access to natural materials.

Instructions:

1. Split the class into four teams.
2. Give each team hoop.
3. Explain that you will shout out something for them to find, they must run off and find the object/s and put them in the hoop.
4. If you give a number of objects – say three green leaves, they can only put the correct number of leaves in their hoop.
5. When you blow your whistle twice, they must return to the hoop even if they haven't found what you have called out.
6. Some ideas: green leaves, bent stick, feather, brown leaves, blades of grass, daisy, dandelion, round stone, rectangle stone, brown stone, grey stone, 'Y' stick, a leaf bigger than their hand, a stick the size of their pointy finger, tiny stones etc.
7. Shout out a number and the object and let the teams try and find them, there are two options now, when one team has found the objects you can blow the whistle twice and call everyone back or give them a bit longer to try and find the objects.
8. When ready to end the game, blow the whistle twice, the team with the correct number of materials is the winner.

Health and Safety

Use general guidelines for working with natural materials.

If children are collecting remind them to be aware of what they are picking up and that they are only allowed to use natural materials that are on the ground. They must not take living plants or leaves without permission.

Risk of tripping/falling while running

Risk of banging into each other while running around.

Rules for children

Be mindful of others when running around.

If you have been asked to collect a certain number of something, you can only put that many in your hoop so discuss as a team what you are putting in.

Wash hands.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – be active – leaf turn

This simple activity is great in Autumn but can be done at other times of the year if you have some leaves that you can pick off trees or shrubs. Not suitable for windy days.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Be active: Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Lesson time: 15+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Leaves from trees or shrubs, whistle.

Instructions:

1. Split the class into two teams.
2. Give each team roughly half the leaves.
3. The teams run around spreading their leaves out on the playground.
4. One team places the leaves with the upper side of the leaf facing up, the other team places the leaves with the lower side facing up.
5. When the teams have spread their leaves out, call one team to one side of the playground, the other team on the opposite side.
6. At the blow of your whistle the teams have to run around turning the leaves to their team's correct side. (Either upper side up or lower side up)
7. After an while blow your whistle and count the leaves, the team with the most leaves in their position are the winners.

Health and Safety

Minor risk of falling/tripping when running.

Risk of banging into each other.

Rules for children

Be mindful of others as you are running around.

Wash hands.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – be active – bubble pop

The age-old game of popping bubbles, so simple but never fails to be a pleasurable activity. Always a smile raiser and generates a sense of fun, more focussed children might try and catch a bubble without popping it.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Be active: Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Lesson time: 10+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Bottle of bubbles.

Instructions:

1. This doesn't really need any instructions!
2. Blow bubbles and let the children try and pop them.
3. Some children might like to try and catch a bubble without popping it.

Health and Safety

Minor risk of falling/tripping when running.
Risk of banging into each other.

Rules for children

Be mindful of others as you are running around.
Wash hands.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – be active – bird feed relay

Children work together in their teams to create a nest and then take turns in collecting worms to feed their babies. This first part of this activity involves teamwork while the second encourages turn taking.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Be active: Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Lesson time: 15+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Wool cut into short (around 5cm) lengths, tweezers or pegs enough for one per child – can use fingers if you have no access to tweezers or pegs.

Instructions:

1. Split the class into four teams.
2. Explain each team has to build a nest using sticks and tweezers, pegs or fingers as beaks.
3. While the children are building their nests, scatter the wool around the area you are working in.
4. When the nests are finished, explain that the baby birds have hatched and are hungry.
5. Number everyone in the team so they know who will be going first.
6. The teams have to collect the wool and take them back to the nest, but they must take turns and do it as a relay.
7. Ready steady GO!
8. Keep going until all the worms have been collected.

Health and Safety

Minor risk of falling/tripping when running.
Risk of banging into each other.

Rules for children

Be mindful of others as you are running around.
Take turns, you cannot go to look for worms until the person in front of you comes back.
Wash hands.

Teach it Outside

Five Ways to Wellbeing



Take notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities. (www.mind.org.uk)

Teach it Outside

5 Ways to Wellbeing – take notice – worry blow

A wonderful activity that turns worries into bubbles and releases anxieties whilst increasing focus. Involves blowing bubbles too!

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Take notice: To strengthen and broaden awareness. To help to regulate and manage own behaviour. To enhance self-understanding and encourage the making of positive choices. To find greater enjoyment in small moments.

Activity time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 10 mins.

Resources: Bubble mixture (to make use 6 pts water to 1pt washing up liquid), bubble wands (these can be made with garden wire, If necessary).

Instructions:

1. Talk to the children about when we feel a bit 'wobbly'/worried. Ask the children to verbalise how it feels: butterflies in tummy, headaches, sweating, shaky...
2. Practice some hand breathing. Run a finger up and down the fingers of the other hand. Breathing in through the nose, whilst slowly travelling your finger up the thumb, then out through the mouth whilst your finger runs down the thumb. Repeat this slow breathing pattern, whilst running your finger up and down all the other fingers on your hand.
3. Now explain that we are going to blow out a worry into a bubble, nice and slowly. It's good to talk to others about our worries, so we can tell our friend the worry, if we want to.
4. Blow your worry into a bubble and watch it gently float away.
5. If the children can't think of a worry, then they can just enjoy the experience of slow breathing and the calmness of blowing the bubbles.
6. Of course children love to pop bubbles! So perhaps allow time to do this at the end of the activity, as a reward for calmly and slowly blowing their bubbles.
7. As an alternative, this activity may be done with imaginary balloons.

Health and Safety:

Ensure the children don't ingest the bubble mixture and are careful of their eyes.

This activity has the potential for children to disclose worries which may be a safeguarding concern, so be mindful of this.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others and allow others the right to enjoy the activity.

Have a try at something new.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Ways to Wellbeing – take notice – stick walking

We all like taking dogs for walks, in this activity children take their stick for a walk! A great sensory activity for all ages.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Take notice: To strengthen and broaden awareness. To help to regulate and manage own behaviour. To enhance self-understanding and encourage the making of positive choices. To find greater enjoyment in small moments.

Activity time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 10 mins.

Resources: Access to long sticks, if only short sticks are available children can tie string on them like a lead.

Instructions:

1. Go through the safety of carrying a long stick - upright, by your side, full finger and thumb grasp, be aware of others around us. If on a lead, children must not swing the sticks around.
2. Children may want to etch/pencil draw a little face at the top-end of their stick. Perhaps even name their stick.
3. Explain that we are going to take our sticks for a walk through the grounds. *What different ground might the stick travel over and what patterns and paths might the stick leave behind, in its trail?*
4. Set the children off, freely roaming around the area, dragging their sticks behind them. Point out to individuals the patterns they have left behind. *How might they make different patterns and paths? Can the stick follow a parallel path to another stick? Can we see where the sticks have walked through some fallen leaves? Can your stick create a trail for other sticks to follow?* Encourage the children to walk their sticks quite slowly, and look behind them to see the effects.
5. Ask any children to demonstrate part of their stick walk where they noticed particular sounds that the stick made, such as scraping noises. Or were there any particular vibrations from the stick, such as bumpy ones?
6. At the end of the activity the sticks might be placed in a pile, as a home for wildlife, or perhaps used again to create dens.

Health and Safety:

Ensure that the children have plenty of space between them, whilst travelling with their sticks.

Sticks should be vertical or leaning vertical, at all times.

Be aware of splintered wood, on the sticks.

Ensure children are aware of the physical boundaries of the outdoor area.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others and allow others the right to enjoy the activity.

Have a try at something new.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Ways to Wellbeing – take notice – follow, find, feel

A sensory experience for small groups or the whole class.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Take notice: To strengthen and broaden awareness. To help to regulate and manage own behaviour. To enhance self-understanding and encourage the making of positive choices. To find greater enjoyment in small moments.

Activity time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 10 mins.

Resources: Individual paint colour strips, of colours of nature (available from DIY stores), washing/cleaning facilities for feet, bare-foot walk - this could be in large trays lined up, or straight onto the ground as a path with small sections. You could use - sand; soil, cut grass; leaves; twigs; bark chippings etc., fruit or other healthy snacks (NB this is dependent on present Covid 19 policy)

Instructions:

1. Ask the children to remember their 5 senses. Start with 'sight'. Give out paint colour strips and set off for a walk around the school grounds. Ask the children to try and find as many things as they can see, which match the colours on their paint strips. They can take a photograph with their imaginary camera.
2. Next, find a quiet place to (ideally) sit down. Ask the children to close their eyes, if they are comfortable doing so. Give them a minute or so to listen out for 4 sounds they can hear. The children might like to feedback on what they heard.
3. Ask the children which senses they haven't used yet. Pick out 'feel/touch'. Ask the children to remove their shoes and socks and take it in turns to walk slowly through the trays or path, which contain different touch sensations. You may find the children want to do this several times, others may be more hesitant.
4. After cleaning feet if necessary, provide the children with a healthy snack. Ask them to smell it first. Is it sweet smelling? Can you describe the smell? Ask the children to eat their snack slowly and think about the taste. NB crunchy foods, such as raw carrots can provide a very regulating

experience for anyone who may be struggling to regulate their own emotions.

Health and Safety:

Be aware of anything which may cause adverse skin reactions or injury, such as splinters, during the bare-foot walk.

Check for food and pollen allergies.

Clean hands before eating snacks.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others and allow others the right to enjoy the activity.

Have a try at something new.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Ways to Wellbeing – take notice – cloud watching

Children research birds and then go outside to study the birds around the school grounds. A simple but magically experiential activity.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Take notice: To strengthen and broaden awareness. To help to regulate and manage own behaviour. To enhance self-understanding and encourage the making of positive choices. To find greater enjoyment in small moments.

Activity time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Mats to lie on, if the ground is damp/cold.

Instructions:

1. Ask the children to lie flat down on their backs, beneath the cloudy sky. (NB some children may find this difficult to do, so provide alternatives, such as sitting or lying on their sides).
2. Ask the children to curl up their toes, pull in the muscles on their legs, buttocks, tummies... pull shoulders right up to ears, working up to their faces where they close their mouths tight and shut their eyes. Hold this stiff tight position. Ask the children to slowly uncurl their toes, letting them go as droopy and floppy as possible. Work upwards, through the body, relaxing leg muscles, torso muscles and letting the shoulders drop down. Unclench the hands and spread out the fingers. Drop the mouth open but keep eyes now gently closed.
3. Instruct the children to open their eyes, if they would like. Explain that they are as light as a cloud. Take some deep breaths together. Ask the children to take their finger and slowly trace up and down the fingers of their other hand. Tracing up: breathing in through the nose. Travelling down: breathing out through the mouth. Teacher walk round the children doing this with your own hand, to demonstrate. Take it slowly.
4. Ask the children to lie quietly and watch the clouds. Can they follow their movement across the sky? What shapes can they see in the clouds? Do they see any animals? Can they trace the cloud shapes with their fingers? Can they follow the direction with their fingers? (Can they name the types of clouds (KS2)?

5. To conclude, ask the children to think about how they feel, lying peacefully whilst cloud watching. Can they write a word which explains how they feel, in the sky? Or perhaps draw an emoji?

Health and Safety:

Take care in bright sun and warn the children to only look at the clouds and the sky.

Be aware of any insects within the ground which may bite.

Monitor the ground temperature and the possibility of children becoming cold.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others and allow others the right to enjoy the activity.

Have a try at something new.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Ways to Wellbeing – take notice – bird watch

Children research birds and then go outside to study the birds around the school grounds. A simple but magically experiential activity.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Take notice: To strengthen and broaden awareness. To help to regulate and manage own behaviour. To enhance self-understanding and encourage the making of positive choices. To find greater enjoyment in small moments.

Activity time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Bird information books, pencils, paper & clipboards, binoculars (not essential)

Instructions:

1. Give the children time to look through books or a presentation about native birds.
2. Make children aware of conditions that birds need when they stop on the ground or in a tree ie quiet and calm.
3. Settle down with binoculars – if using, bird books, paper & pencils. Ideally seated. You may need to remind children about noise levels.
4. Watch for birds and allow children freedom with how they record their findings, if indeed they want to. Some children will just enjoy watching, whereas others will want to draw or write what they see.
5. Give the children a few questions - *What colours can you see? What are the birds doing? What type are they?*
6. Provided an opportunity for the children to share their findings.
7. Can any of the children explain how they felt, as they sat quietly watching the birds? Would any of them like to be a bird? Why?

Health and Safety

Remind children about safe binocular use, such as avoiding looking at the sun.

Rules for children

5 Ways to Wellbeing - take Notice – Bird watch

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Be mindful of others and allow others the right to enjoy the activity.
Have a try at something new.
Listen carefully to instructions.
Wash hands after activity.
Respect nature.

Teach it Outside

Five Ways to Wellbeing



Learn

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. (www.mind.org.uk)

Learning a new practical skill helps to fire the brain in all ages but also increases confidence and develops a positive attitude to learning.

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5 Steps to wellbeing – learn – straw dolly

Straw dollies are traditionally made around harvest time and were intended to honour the harvest gods and ensure good harvests the following year. This simplified version can be adapted for a range of activities and ages.

Key stage: KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Learn: To learn a new skill/to practice motor skills/to work together to complete a task/to find pleasure in the moment.

Lesson time: 30 mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Long grass or straw, small rubber bands or if children can tie knots - string, scissors

Instructions:

1. Explain to the children that they are going to be making dolls from grass.
2. If you have access to long grass, let the children go and collect bunches to work from. If not hand out bunches of grass to everyone.
3. Hand out 6 rubber bands (or string) and scissors to each child.
4. It is easiest if you model and the children copy, so ensure you have adequate resources for your own doll.
5. Fold the grass in half and put a rubber band over the top to make the head.
6. Divide the remaining grass into three, the middle section being the largest.
7. Cut the two smaller sections with scissors to make them shorter and tie the ends with elastic bands to make the arms.
8. Tie the remaining section to create the body.
9. Leave as is for a skirt or separate into two legs and tie off.
10. Children can decorate their dolls with daisies and other flowers.
11. Older children might like to plait arms and legs.

Health and Safety:

Be very aware of any hay fever sufferers before starting this activity.

Use general guidelines for working with natural materials.

If children are collecting remind them to be aware of what they are picking up and that they are only allowed to use natural materials that

are on the ground. They must not take living plants or leaves without permission.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others.

Listen carefully and follow instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – learn – knot tying

Knot tying is a great skill and one that is lost today. With many children having Velcro shoes many cannot tie a bow and will leave primary education without this basic skill. Here are three simple knots to teach your class.

Key stage: KS2

Learning Objectives

Learn: To learn a new skill/to practice motor skills/to work together to complete a task/to find pleasure in the moment.

Activity time: 10+ mins.

Preparation time: 10 mins.

Resources: short lengths of thin rope, chord, twine or string, a bundle of short sticks.

1. Teaching knots is much easier if you can model the knots, so take some time to learn the knots you are going to be teaching here.
2. We will start with the reef knot, this is like a double knot and will help teach children the basics.
3. See the reef knot activity sheet – this can be handed out to children while you model for them to copy.
4. Once they have mastered this knot, move onto the slip knot. The slip knot is actually half a bow and is a useful knot as is easy to undo.
5. Once again hand out the slip knot activity sheet and model.
6. Finally, when they have mastered the slip knot, hand out sticks and the final activity sheet and show children the clove hitch. This knot is really useful when making dens.

Health and Safety:

Slight risk of children trying knots around themselves.

Rules for children:

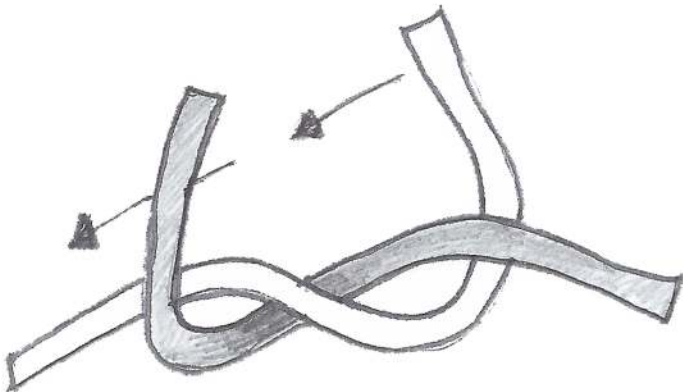
Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

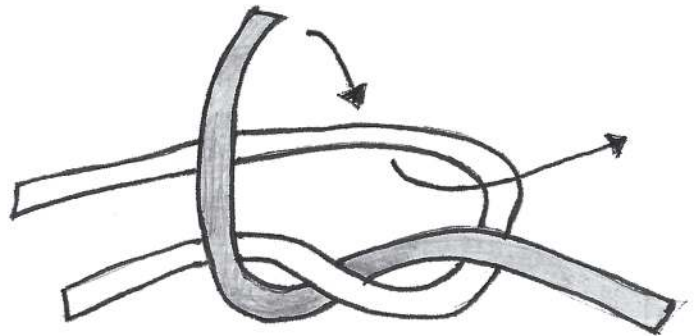
How to make a reef knot

Also known as the square knot, a reef knot is a really old knot, even showing up in ancient Greek and Egyptian art. It's very easy to learn.

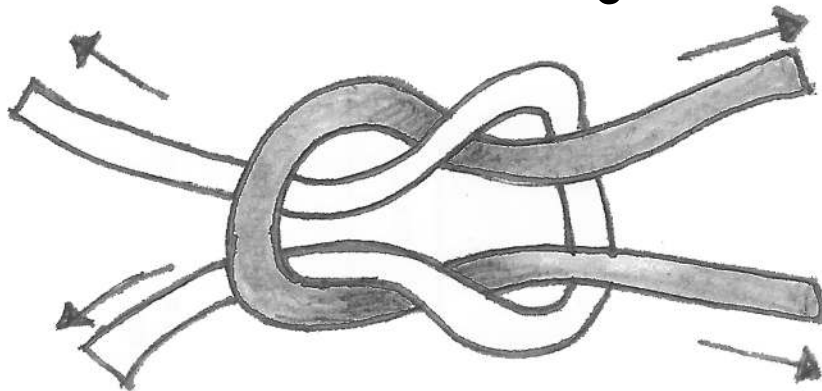
1. White goes under grey.



2. Pass the grey end over and through the white loop.



3. Pull all ends to tighten



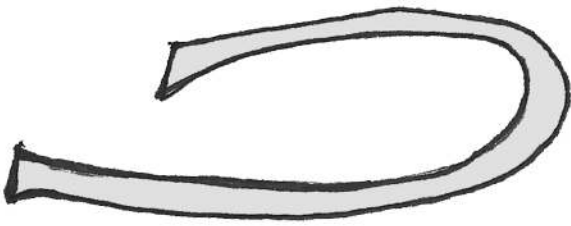
Use this knot to tie two pieces of rope together. It can be remembered by this little rhyme:

Right over left, left over right, makes a reef knot both tidy and tight.

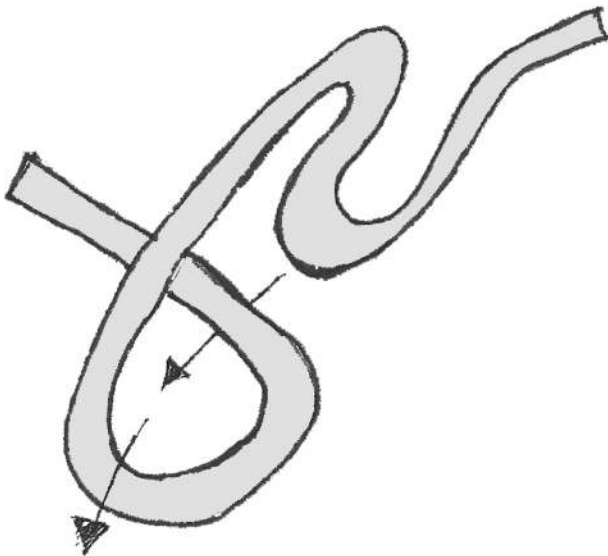
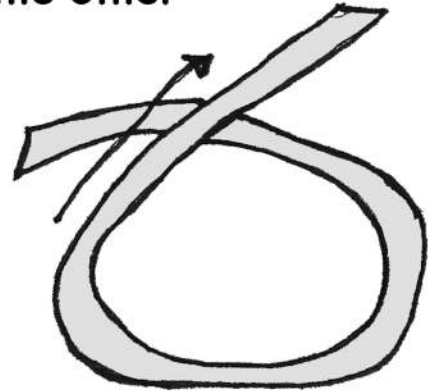
How to make a slip knot

Follow the diagram below to make a slip knot. A slip knot is half a bow and is useful as it can be undone very quickly but at the same time is very strong.

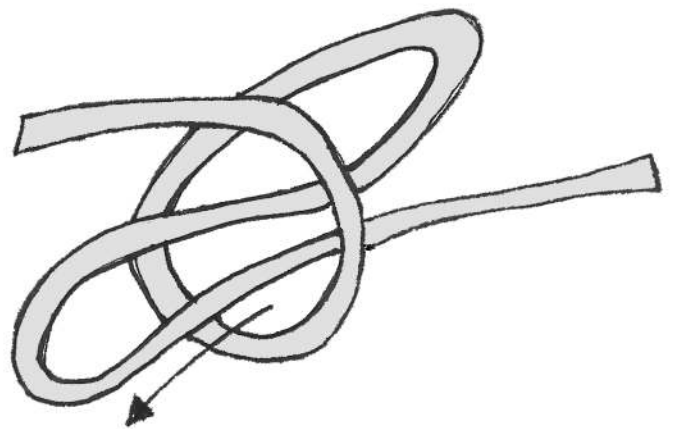
1. Take the rope and make a loop



2. Pass one piece over the other



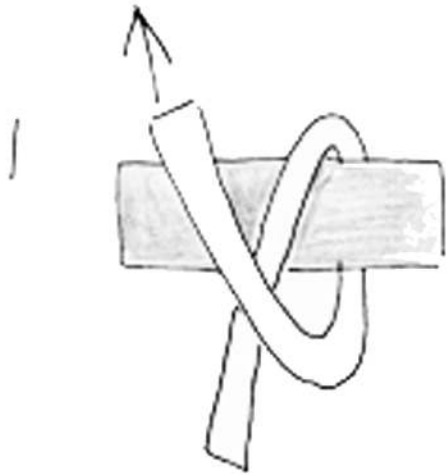
3. Make another loop and pass it through the first loop



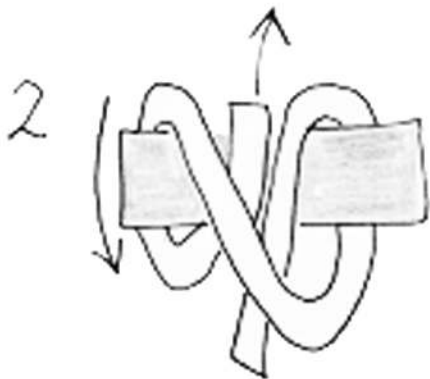
4. Pull the loop whilst making sure you don't pull the loose end through

How to make a clove hitch knot

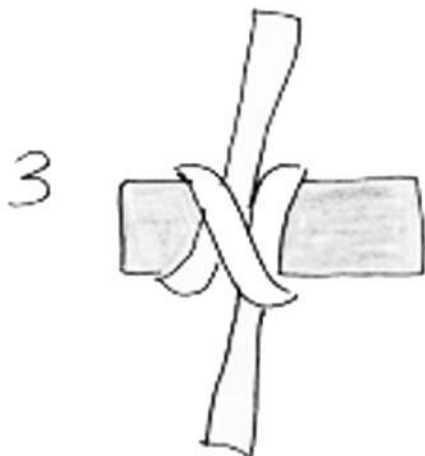
The knot's origin can be traced back to the early 16th century where it's been spotted in sculptures and paintings. Follow the diagrams below to learn how to make a clove hitch knot.



Run the rope right around the stick making sure you cross over the rope when you come back round.



Take the rope left around the stick and when you come back around, push the end of the rope up through the middle of the two loops on the stick.



Pull tight. You have a clove hitch.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – learn – den building

Children work together in their teams to create a den or shelter using materials supplied. If resources are hard to find use the same principles to make a mini den for a fairy or elf.

Key stage: KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Learn: To learn a new skill/to practice motor skills/to work together to complete a task/to find pleasure in the moment.

Lesson time: 50 mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Long sticks or bamboo canes, tarpaulin, rope, tent pegs, fabric

Instructions:

1. Split the class into teams.
2. Ask the questions: Where are you going to build your den and for who? What materials have you got to hand?
3. To create a sturdy structure for the den you need a frame.
4. Option 1: Find two trees or poles - use a suitable place in the playground around the play equipment if you have no woodland. Lodge one long stick horizontally between two supports/trees. Lean long sticks all the way along both sides of the horizontal support to make a sloped wall.
5. Option 2: Use a Y stick, sometimes called a forked stick, or a Y shape in a tree, you can create a den by leaning one long stick in the Y and the other end on the ground.
6. Lean other sticks across the main stick to create a secure frame.
7. Option 3: Create a wigwam triangular shape by leaning three Y sticks together or tying three long sticks to a tree.
8. Cover with a tarp to keep it waterproof or with leaves and natural materials.
9. Option 4: If you have rope and tarp and no long sticks, make a line with the rope across from one support to another, attaching rope to the tree ideally using a clove hitch. (See knot activity for a clove hitch)
10. Place the tarp over the rope like a sheet on a washing line and peg out - either in an A tent shape or just along one side.

Health and Safety:

Use general guidelines for working with natural materials.

If children are collecting remind them to be aware of what they are picking up and that they are only allowed to use natural materials that are on the ground. They must not take living plants or leaves without permission.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others.

Everyone in the team must have a job.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – learn – weaving

This simple weaving technique is called God's Eye weaving, or *Ojo de Dios*, of Mexican origin which has spiritual significance to its original creators, the *Huichol* people of western Mexico.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Learn: To learn a new skill/to practice motor skills/to work together to complete a task/to find pleasure in the moment.

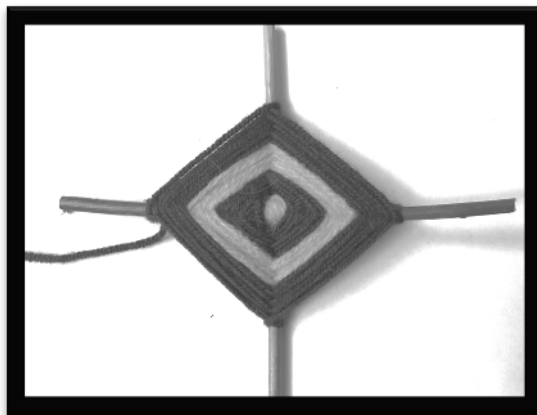
Lesson time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Depending on KS and materials available: sticks, long bits of material or bits tied together, string, wool or ribbon.

Instructions:

1. Ask the children to find two straight sticks exactly the same length.
2. Ask them to pair up at this point to help each other to secure their sticks in a cross. One child holds the sticks while the other wraps wool around it to hold it in place.
3. Once both crosses are secure, it's time for the children to weave.
4. Explain they wrap the wool around one stick, then move on to the stick next to it and wrap it around that. Keep on going by wrapping the yarn around each stick in the cross and moving on in a circular pattern.
5. When they have a section of one colour, they can begin to add in more colours by tying a new colour on and continuing to wrap around the cross.



Health and Safety:

Use general guidelines for working with natural materials.

If children are collecting remind them to be aware of what they are picking up and that they are only allowed to use natural materials that are on the ground. They must not take living plants or leaves without permission.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Help support each other.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – learn – hapa zome

Hapa Zome is a Japanese word meaning 'leaf dye'. Natural pigments from leaves and flowers are transferred onto fabric or paper to create a botanical image. The activity is relaxing and very simple and is suitable for ages and abilities.

Key stage: EYFS, KS1, KS2

Learning Objectives

Learn: To learn a new skill/to practice motor skills/to work together to complete a task/to find pleasure in the moment.

Lesson time: 20+ mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Small smooth stones either bought or found (can also use small hammers from D&T cupboard), plain squares or triangles of white fabric, access to leaves and flowers, a hard surface – bench or piece of wood.

Instructions:

1. Ask the children to find some interesting leaves or flowers – soft green leaves, even grass works well, evergreen waxy leaves do not work very well.
2. Give each child a piece of fabric and ask them to lay out the leaves and petals in a pattern on *half* the cloth.
3. When they are happy with their pattern, fold the cloth over to cover – as if doing a butterfly splat painting!
4. Hand out the stones and ask the children to bash the material (gently) until they see the colour and shape of the leaves or flowers come through.
5. Carry on until all the colour has been bashed out of the leaves and flowers.

Health and Safety:

Use general guidelines for working with natural materials.

If children are collecting remind them to be aware of what they are picking up and that they are only allowed to use natural materials that are on the ground. They must not take living plants or leaves without permission.

There is a risk of banged fingers so remind the children to watch out for their fingers and not too bang too hard!

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Do not bash too hard and watch your fingers!

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

Five Ways to Wellbeing



Give

Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing. (www.mind.org.uk)

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – give – the magic box!

Key Stage: KS1 & KS2

Wellbeing: Give

Learning objectives: To encourage the use of the imagination and sharing of ideas/ to strengthen and explore non-verbal communication/ to find enjoyment in small things

Activity time: 20 mins.

Resources: None needed.

Instructions:

1. With the children in a big circle explain the game to the group:
2. Mime a box. Show them the shape, indicate the weight and demonstrate any special features: a catch, or flaps. Ask the children what special features the box has.
3. This is the magic box from which each member of the group can produce anything, rather like *Mary Poppins'* bottomless bag.
4. Divide the class up into small circle groups if needed.
5. The box is passed from child to child. Each takes their turn to open the box and take out a mimed object, which they demonstrate, without words, to the group. The others have to guess the object. When it is correctly guessed, the box is passed on to the next child.
6. Variations: The child can choose someone to give their mimed object to. Or choose a theme - animals or presents - or focus on a specific topic or theme for the older ones.

Health and Safety:

No additional risk.

Rules for children:

- Be mindful of others.
- Listen carefully to instructions.
- Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – give - treasure hunt

Everyone loves a treasure hunt – children create a treasure hunt for another team or class to follow, a creative approach to giving and sharing.

Key Stage: KS1 & KS2

Wellbeing: Give

Learning objectives: To think about the outdoor area and its features. Practice fine motor skills. Use creativity. Think about others. Create pride in their work and an area.

Activity time: 45 mins.

Preparation time: 15 mins.

Resources: Inspiration quotes printed on both sides laminated and cut up, access to sticks or chalk.

Instructions:

1. Take the children outside and put in working groups or teams.
2. Small groups of 4 or five are better than larger groups.
3. Give each group a card and explain this is their treasure and they have to hide it for another team to find.
4. They can put their treasure under a stone, behind a piece of play equipment or bury it.
5. Give each team sometime to bury or hide their treasure.
6. They must then use stick arrows or chalk arrows to leave a trail for another team to follow.
7. If you are in woodland show the children how to clear a space with your foot and make an arrow using three sticks.
8. If you are in a playground either use chalk or give the children some time to collect sticks and show them how to make an arrow using three sticks.
9. Explain that there can only be 5 tiny steps between each arrow, this stops them from spreading the arrows out too far to be followed.
10. Let each team make their trail.
11. If any team finishes early ask them to create a wise message for the other teams.
12. When everyone has finished swop the teams around and see if they can follow the trails to the treasure – this part of the activity goes very quickly!
13. When all the treasure has been found read out the treasure cards and discuss the meanings.
14. The cards can be arranged to make a picture on the reverse.

Health and Safety:

Children should be reminded of the boundaries of where they are allowed to go.

Use general guidelines for working with natural materials.

If children are collecting remind them to be aware of what they are picking up and that they are only allowed to use natural materials that are on the ground. They must not take living plants or leaves without permission.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. *Dr Seuss*

A person who has good thoughts cannot ever be ugly. If you have good thoughts they will shine out of your face like sunbeams. *Dahl*

'What day is it?' asked Pooh.
'It's today,' squeaked Piglet.
'My favorite day,' said Pooh.". *Milne*

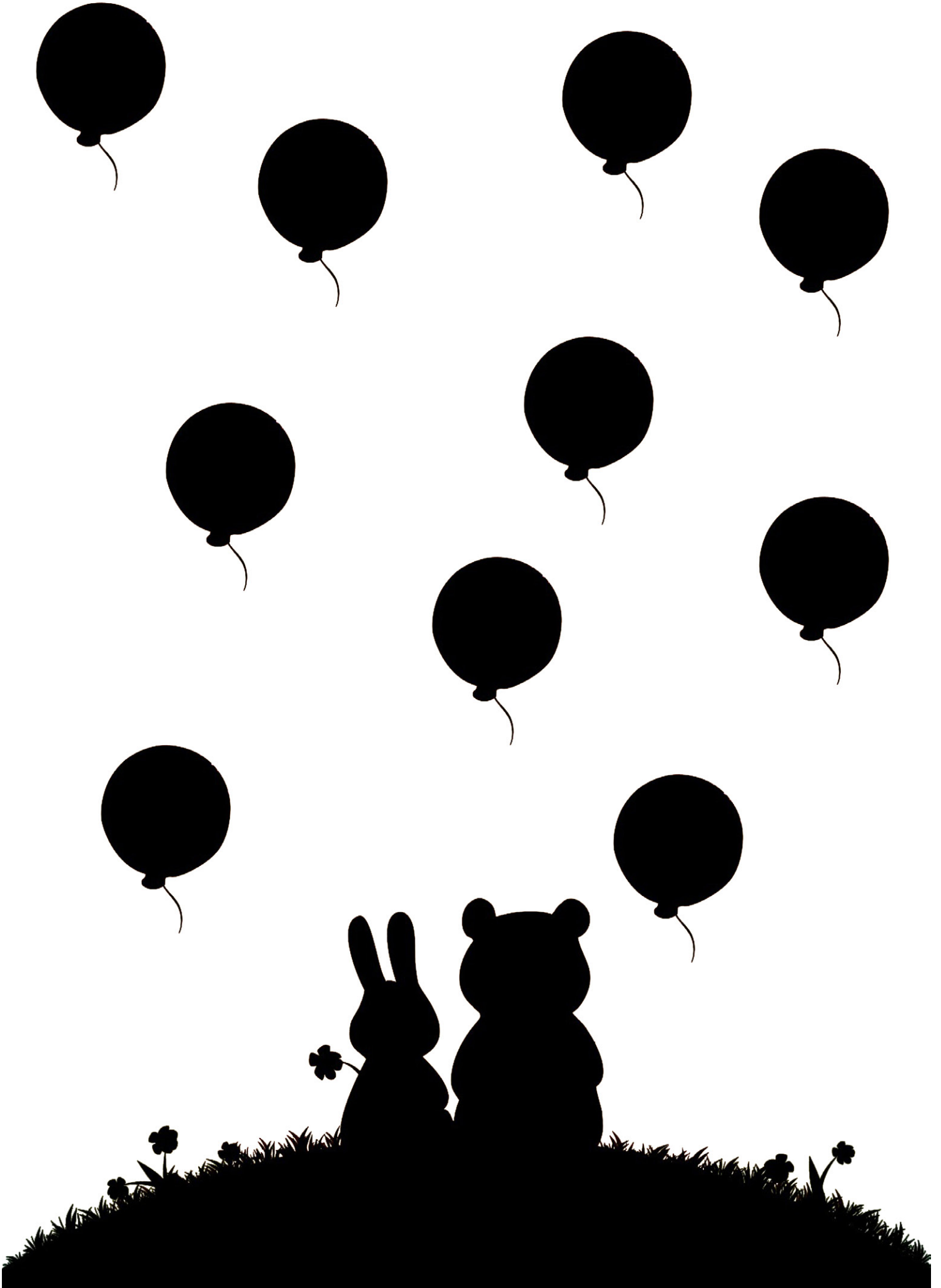
"You're mad, bonkers, completely off your head. But I'll tell you a secret. All the best people are."
Carroll

You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. *Milne*

Those who don't who don't believe in magic will never find it.
Dahl

"Happiness can be found even in the darkest times if one only remembers to turn *on the light.*"
Rowling

"I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship."
Alcott



Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – give - friendship bracelets

A wonderful way to learn a new skill and think about other people.

Key Stage: KS1 & KS2

Wellbeing: Give and Learn

Learning objectives: To learn a new skill, to practice resilience and patience, to experience the joy of making and giving your own gifts.

Activity time: 20 mins.

Preparation time: 5 mins.

Resources: Three strands of wool or embroidery thread pre child. Each length should be 25cm - 30cm.

Instructions:

1. Explain to the class that we are making friendship bracelets, which must be given away to a friend for them to have. When a friendship bracelet is given, it is giving a piece of the creators time and thoughts to the friend, and is very special.
2. Split the class into pairs (friends if possible), and hand out three lengths of wool or thread per child. If possible, ask them to choose their colours based on what they think their friend might like.
3. Ask the children to tie a simple knot at the top of the three threads, as close to the ends as possible.
4. One child should now hold the knot, and the other child can twist the threads around and around, until they start to twist in on themselves.
5. The other end of the threads can now be tied in a knot. It will untwist a little, but should produce a good result.
6. Alternatively, instead of twisting the threads, older children may like to plait the threads. This means bringing the outside threads in to the middle and then doing the same with the threads now on the outside.
7. Another technique could be to loop the left thread around the middle and right thread, and then doing the same from the left each time. It doesn't matter if it gets a little muddled, as each child will be producing something unique and beautiful to them.
8. With each end knotted, the pair can swap and work on the other child's bracelet.

9. When all the children have finished, they can give each other their work, and tie it simply and loosely around their friends wrist, or on their zip pull or kept as a bookmark or bag decoration.

Health and Safety:

Children should be reminded not to tie anything tightly around any part of their body, including the wrists. You should always be able to fit at least two fingers under the bracelet.

Rules for children:

Be mindful of others.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Persevere, learning a new skill can take time.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – give - rock drawings

A creative way to liven up a walk and think about other people.

Key Stage:	KS1 & KS2
Wellbeing:	Give/share
Learning objectives:	To create a picture or message on a rock and to experience the joy of making and giving your own gifts.
Activity time:	20 mins.
Preparation time:	5 mins.
Resources:	Sharpies/ permanent markers in a range of colours OR paint and clear varnish, smooth rocks and stones (can be found on a walk, or purchased from garden centres and DIY stores.)

Instructions:

1. Explain to the class that we are decorating rocks to leave behind for others to find and maybe raise a smile. Have any of the children found anything like this before?
2. Working outside, children should sit somewhere comfortable and dry. This may mean using mats if the ground is cold or damp.
3. Using a pencil, sketch out your design. Maybe the class could choose a theme relevant to them, their class or topic. Or just free style! As it is a small space to design, simple patterns or messages work best.
4. When confident with your design, draw over with permanent marker.
5. You can sign your rock with your name, or if your school has a social media account, ask that any found rocks are tagged on there.

Health and Safety:

Children should be reminded that using permanent markers can cause marks on items that they don't want to be coloured! Always lay down a protective barrier like paper if not working outside.
Rocks can be heavy and painful if dropped accidentally on toes, so never carry more than you can manage safely!

Rules for children:

Lids must be replaced on pens so we can use them again.
Listen carefully to instructions.
Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

5 Steps to wellbeing – give – bunting

A creative and personal way to make your outdoor area feel like a party!

Key Stage: KS1 & KS2

Wellbeing: Give/share

Learning objectives: To create bunting. Practice fine motor skills. Use creativity. Think about others. Create pride in their work and an area.

Activity time: 30 mins.

Preparation time: 15 mins.

Resources: Pencils and Sharpies/ permanent markers in a range of colours, white or pale fabric in triangles or pennants or squares, at least 20cm long. Around 4cm of this will be used to attach it to the string. An old cut up sheet or duvet cover is ideal, and cheap, long string or twine, stapler

Instructions:

1. Explain to the class that we are making bunting to decorate our outdoor area. Perhaps to welcome the class/ school back after a holiday or isolation, or for a festival, or maybe just because!
2. Working outside, children should sit somewhere comfortable and dry. This may mean using mats if the ground is cold or damp.
3. Each child needs one fabric shape each, and a pencil to sketch their design. Simple patterns or pictures and short slogans work best. If writing a word, perhaps the children could work together to do one letter each.
4. When happy with their sketch, the children can use permanent markers to colour and outline their work.
5. As each fabric shape is completed, attach it by staples to the string, by folding approximately 2cm over the string. Space out the fabric according to your space. Ensure you have left at least 50cm of string at both ends to attach it to something.
6. Keep working on fabric shapes until you are done. Hang the completed bunting length up!

Health and Safety:

Children should be reminded that using permanent markers can cause marks on items that they don't want to be coloured! Always lay down a protective barrier like paper when not working outside.

Careful when handling the completed bunting length as some of the staples may be sharp.

Rules for children:

Lids must be replaced on pens so we can use them again.

Be mindful of others.

Listen carefully to instructions.

Wash hands after activity.

Teach it Outside

The Back to School Wellbeing Pack was created using the lesson plan formats we are using in our upcoming Teach It Outside website...

Good, easy to find, workable online resources are what every teacher wants but doesn't always get. With 10 years of experience working with primary schools taking classes outside for curriculum lessons, we realised we could help. With Teach It Outside, integrating outdoor learning into the curriculum will become accessible to any teacher in the UK and beyond.

The new Teach it Outside website will make our library of curriculum lessons available to any teacher or school, and will be augmented with backup training videos, help, and support. Each lesson plan provides clear learning objectives, is resource-light, and is easily evidenced, so all you have to do is Teach it Outside!

To make sure you are informed when Teach it Outside goes live (and get first - access to our launch offer!).

Sign up to our mailing list at: growtoschool.co.uk/backtoschool