



A COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF HOW WE INTEGRATE EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE WITH A NATURE FOCUS IN OUR FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



Erasmus+

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THIS DOCUMENT SUMMARIZES THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR FOUR COUNTRIES IN APPROACHING EARLY EDUCATION AND THE USE OF NATURE. IT INCLUDES HOW THE REGULATIONS OF EACH COUNTRY INFLUENCES THE POSSIBILITIES OF LEARNING AND OUR DAILY PRACTICE.



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www.naturepedagogy.com/erasmus

FOREWORD

Anders Farstad



We believe that using nature as our arena for learning is a very innovative way of thinking. We acquire almost everything we need in terms

of learning materials from nature. We stimulate children's physical and intellectual needs by letting them use their bodies in the most challenging ways all the time. They have the possibility to study every little aspect of nature up close, in situ and on a personal level over time. Children can Philosophize about why everything is just as it is, and what it could be or could become. They also experience the changes in weather conditions, and feel the contrasts in e.g. temperatures, simultaneously learning to cope with it.

Letting the children go on a long individual learning journey to discover the answers rather than be told, can be a challenge for some staff. For the children it means a new learning perspective based on curiosity and problem solving thorough fellowship and stimulating the hunger for more learning processes. We see this as a very strong way of early involvement to stimulate further will for learning with a long-lasting impact on the future students.

In our Erasmus+ project Using Nature as a Forceful Learning Arena we had three main focuses which you will be able to learn about in the following project outcomes.

They were:

1. Different ways of conducting the nature focus in the childcare sector in four European countries. You will find a link

to regulations and a description of how they are seen and practiced in each of the countries.

2. Learning videos from the different countries meant to function as inspiring examples for nature based kindergartens all over the world. You will also find the practitioner's comments and advice linked to each of the movies.

3. Video documentation of what we see as basic qualifications or skills for every nature pedagogue all over the world.

We hope that you will be inspired by what you read and see in this presentations.

Anders Farstad, Project Manager and Manager from Hval Gård Naturbarnehage, in Asker, Norway

USING NATURE AS A FORCEFUL LEARNING ARENA – PROJECT PARTNERS

Auchlone Nature Kindergarten

Auchlone Lodge, Abercairney Estate, By Crieff, PH7 3QZ

+44 (0) 1764 683656 (Auchlone)
+44 (0) 1764 650030 (Head Office)

auchlone@mindstretchers.co.uk

www.auchlone.co.uk

Boldon Nursery School

Reginald Street, Boldon Colliery

NE35 9DG

+44 (0) 191 536 3669

info@boldon-nur.s-tyneside.sch.uk
www.boldonnurseryschool.co.uk

Hval Gård barnehage Hvalsveien

Hvalsveien 35

1394 NESBRU

+47 668 51 100f

anders.farstad@asker.kommune.no

www.hvalgard.no

Lesní klub Jurta

Základní škola a Lesní mateřská škola Jurta

Vítězství 121, 405 02 Děčín – Nebočady

+420 603 546 670

info@lesniklub.cz

www.lesniklub.cz

NATURE KINDERGARTEN

What is the definition

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF NATURE KINDERGARTEN?

We have put in a lot of hours discussing a definition of a nature kindergarten. It has proven to be a very difficult task. There are so many different ways to connect to nature with children. It has to been explored from a range of perspectives, based on both location, the different countries cultures and on central/ government regulations. We see big differences between the four countries that are represented in this project, and when we look further afield to Countries in different parts of the world it seems quite impossible to state a single definition of "what is a Nature Kindergarten".

There are some common things that we would like to lay down as a basic rule:

- It must in some way have a clear connection to nature.
- The philosophy must be based on both using and taking care of Nature.
- The Children must have hands on experience in nature.
- Part of the day must be spent outside in natural environments.

We have seen through our surveillance with different "Nature Kindergartens" that the amount of time spent outside can be quite varied. We also see that the natural environments used are very different, depending mostly on rural or urban situated kindergartens. There are also big differences in what is accepted as safe, normal or dangerous activities. In many Countries



we see that risk-management is a huge subject.

As not to exclude many settings around the world, we find that a set definition of nature kindergartens has to be a local definition for each country. What we have discovered is that as a common expression

it will be better to use the term "Nature based Kindergarten" as this will be most appropriate for a trans-national shared ethos.

COMPARISON OF THE FOUR KINDERGARTENS

Auchlone, Boldon, Hval Gård and Jurta Nature Kindergartens

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KINDERGARTENS AND AMONG COUNTRIES INVOLVED

We have tried to identify the similarities and differences between the nature kindergartens in our project. We see that there are quite different regulations and rules in the different countries, which influence the way that you can perform your daily practice with the children. We have succeeded in picking out seven different qualities that are vital for every nature pedagogue across national borderlines, and we are presenting them to you as small learning Videos. You will see the seven qualities presented by different practitioners from the four countries involved.

A LITTLE BIT BACKGROUND ABOUT PROJECT PARTNERS NATURE KINDERGARTENS

Auchlone Nature Kindergarten, Scotland

In 2006 Mindstretchers opened the first outdoor Nature Kindergarten in Scotland. Auchlone Nature Kindergarten is an award winning early years centre (for 2 to 5 year olds) based near Crieff in Scotland. The children spend over 80% of their time outdoors while at Auchlone.

Boldon Nursery School — Outdoor Nursery, England

Boldon Nursery School-Outdoor Nursery is a Local Authority maintained nursery school, one of only 4 in the region and set in an area of high deprivation. The focus in all nursery

schools is on narrowing the attainment gap between children to enable all children to have the best start in life, making outstanding progress during their time in nursery.

Hval Gård Naturbarnehage, Norway

Hval Gård and Vepsebolet barnehager is community owned kindergartens run as one unit with 36 children, aged 4-6 years old. They have a base in purpose built buildings without electrical heating. They are all close to the forests and the sea. The Children and Staff are outside all year and all day.

Lesní klub Jurta, Czech Republic

The Jurta Nature Kindergarten opened in 2010 with a great contribution from parents. The kindergarten is located on a farm in rural area. There are 30 registered children aged 3-6 years old. There is also a primary school in the farm area.

We summarise the aspects in the table on the following page.

Clearly, there are differences in terms of size (physical space and number of children), cultures, environment and geo-



Aspects	Boldon Nursery School — Outdoor Nursery, England	Lesní klub Jurta, Czech Republic	Auchlone Nature Kindergarten, Scotland	Hval Gård Naturbarnehage, Norway
Funding	100% education grant	50% state 50% parents	100% education grant extra for wrap around paid by parents	60% state 25% Community and 15% parents
Childcare	x	yes	yes	yes
Ages	3-4 years old	3-7 years old	2-5 years old	3-5 years old 1-3 years old (toddlers group)
Number of children	Up to 100 (50 per session split into smaller groups)	30 split into 2 groups, plus taster group up to 10	Up to 25	36 (all together 170 split into smaller groups)
Session	All day 15 hours free per week. 3hrs per day for 5 days. Or 2x6 hours for 2 days plus 1x3 hours for 1 day Parents can pay to top up to full day.	All day	All day 16 hours free per week for children 3-5 years old.	All day
Staff Qualifications	1 Headteacher NPQH& QTS 1 teacher (degree level)	4 teachers, all qualified	1 manager, 3 Early years practitioners, support from teacher (degree)	1 teacher (degree level)
Statutory requirement on leader qualifications	Qualified teacher (degree level) in nursery schools	1 headteacher (degree level)	Manager degree level	Manager degree level
Staff-to-Children ratio	1-8 (minimum statutory requirements is 1:13)	2:15 (minimum statutory requirements 1:15)	1:8	2:12
Time spent outside	80%	90%	90%	95%
Access to wilder space	Yes daily within Grounds/ weekly Beach/Burn	Yes	Yes	Yes
Location	Urban	Rural - farm and forest	Rural - forest	Forest and fjord
Daily access	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Real World learning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7 Qualities of Nature Pedagogue	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1. Similarities and differences between kindergartens – the aspects.

graphical locations, staffing- qualifications, amount of time spent in nature or in the setting, grouping of children, age of children, regulations involved in the respective countries influencing the op-

erations of the kindergartens (including curriculum and statutory biases) and accountability in the terms of local and national authorities inspection procedures.

On the contrary, we have found similarities in the context of working with children. We agreed on that children in all the four kindergartens

- have confidence,
- are able to self-regulate,
- are motivated,
- are independent,
- are resilient,
- can manage situations and

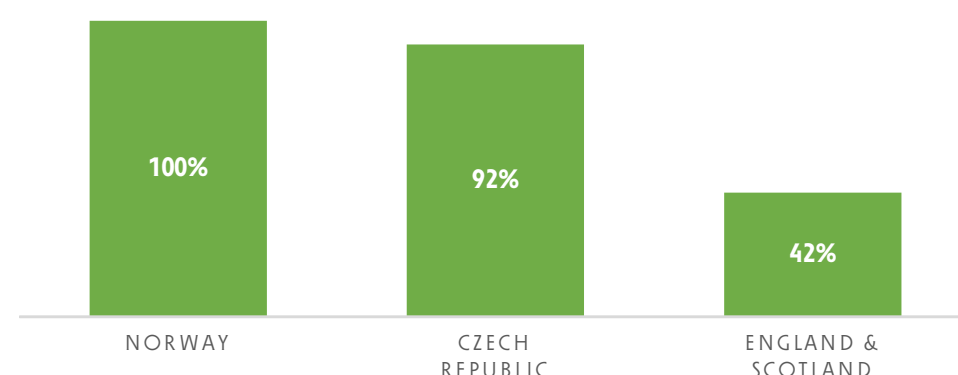
- have the same experience.

In the early stages of the project and as a starting point to the comparison we concluded a brief self-evaluating questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed in local languages, we used same questions in all the four countries. And we obtained answers from a number of nature kindergartens, the numbers were directly linked to the number of kindergartens evaluating themselves as "nature-based" in the respec-

tive countries, Norway, England & Scotland and the Czech Republic.

We distributed the questionnaire to over 250 contacts in Norway, 140 contacts in the Czech Republic and over 200 contacts in England and Scotland. We received ca. 20% responses, in Norway we worked with 72 answers, 27 in the Czech Republic and 44 in England and Scotland.

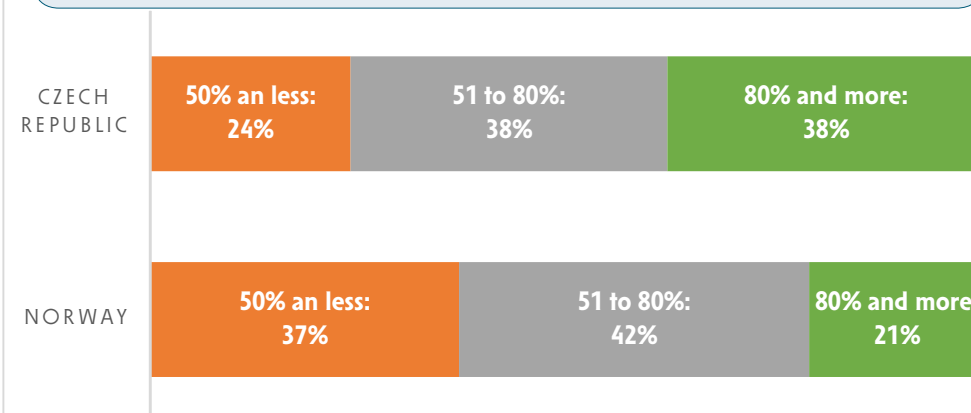
Q1: Do you offer full day provision?



Q2: What is your group and total capacity?

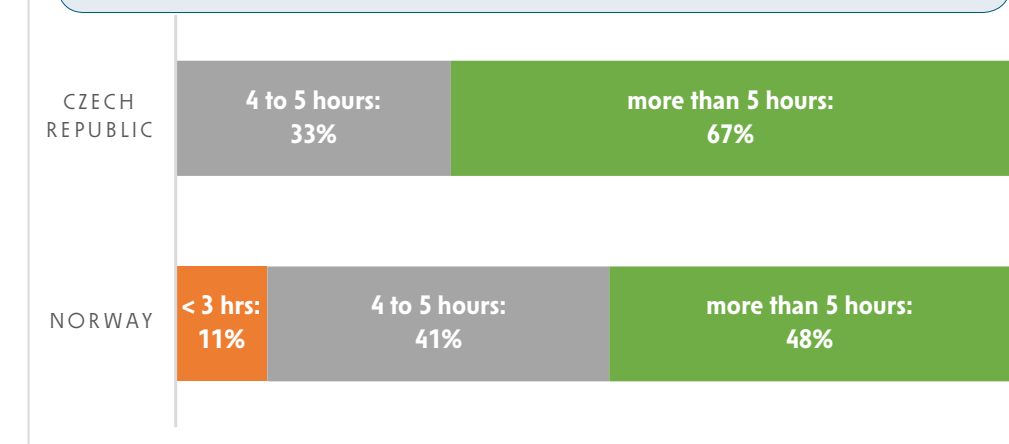
	Group capacity	Total capacity
NORWAY	3 to 94; median 19	12 to 176; median 36
CZECH REPUBLIC	12 to 20; median 14	12 to 61; median 26
ENGLAND & SCOTLAND	6 to 60; median 33	same as group

Q3: What percentage of time do your children spend in nature during their daily session?*



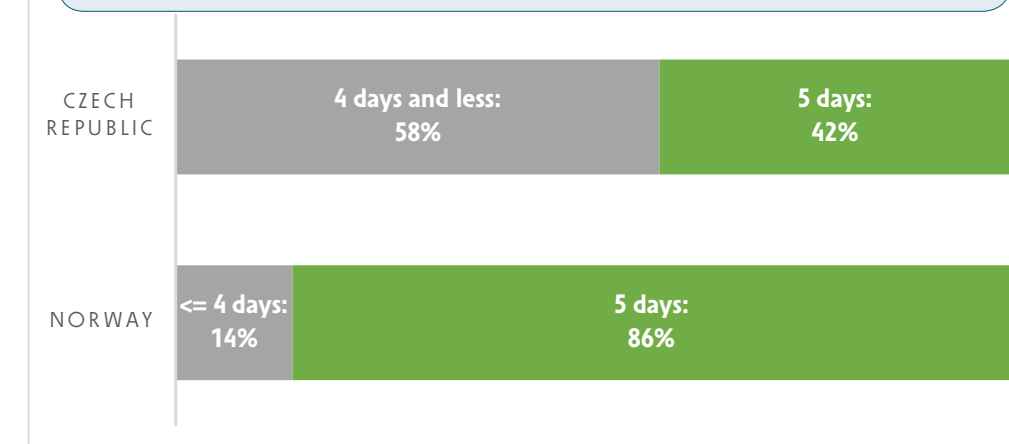
*For England and Scotland we haven't got clear answer because of complexity and variety of daily provisions.

Q4: How much time do children spend in nature per day?*



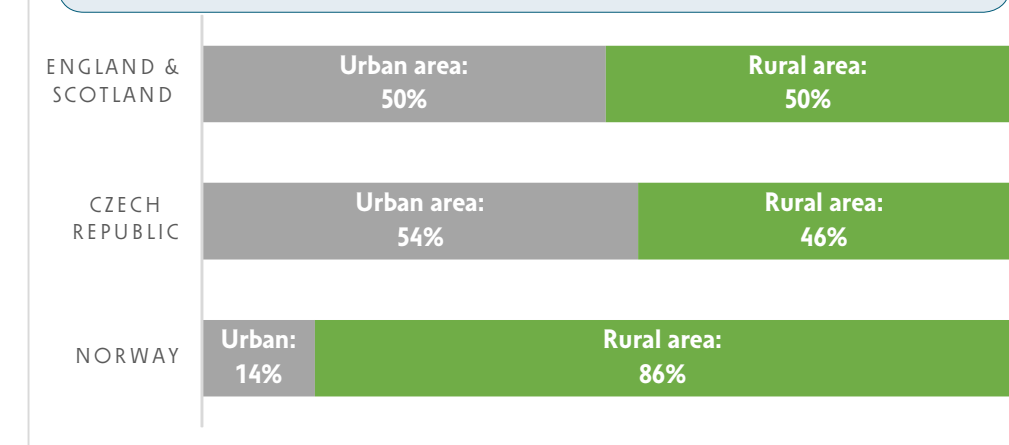
*For England and Scotland, on average, 3.6 hours a day are spent outside.

Q5: How many days per week do children attend?*



*For England and Scotland, on average, 3.5 days a week are attended.

Q6: Where are you situated?



COMPARISON OF THE FOUR COUNTRIES

England, Norway, Scotland and the Czech Republic

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED

We explored regulations in the respective countries and the influence it has on the use of nature in their kindergartens and from a national viewpoint.

England

In England, the National Curriculum and Early Years Foundation Stage guidance for schools across England have limited reference to Nature and its importance for young children. There are aspects of particular emphasis upon children's health and physical education in school, but not directly linked to the outdoors. In addition, there are Ofsted requirements for children to have access to the outdoors and specific statutory guidance which states children must have access to the outdoors daily but not stating for how long or what these experiences should look like. For example, many schools take part in 'outside the classroom' experiences but they are rarely linked to uninterrupted periods of time in nature and more directive such as Geography fieldwork or educational visits to extend learning.

As the focus for education changes from a government perspective and more emphasis is placed upon results and testing, the access to outdoor experiences becomes less and less in mainstream schools as creative teaching in these environments dwindle. However, increasing interest in how the entire curriculum can be met through work in nature, especially maths and literacy which have become increasingly taught in more formal ways, is becoming of inter-

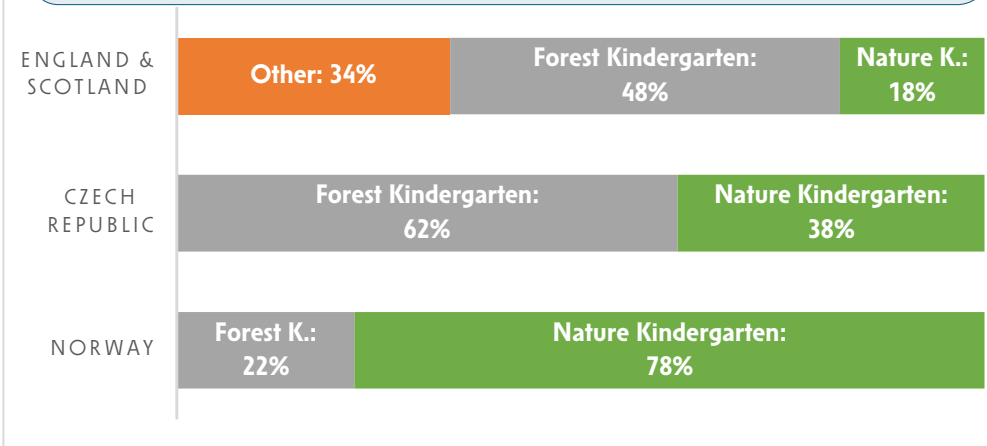


est to the education sector.

With best practice documents emerging regularly and particular emphasis from schools around the country to maximise the use of their outdoor spaces we see some changes in the landscape of how nature is welcomed into settings. However any reference to nature and the outdoors is still not included in policy, referenced within the curriculum or part of an essential remit for schools and so therefore requires increasing evidence to support its value and impact through individuals schools work.

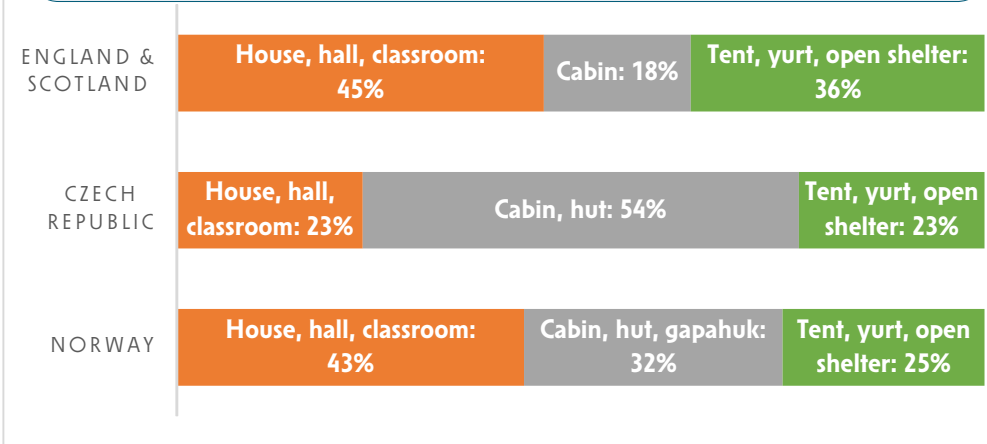
In our culture, the safety of our children in education and their life experiences in general has seen significant shift in society in recent generations whereby parents/ carers do not always feel they can allow their children to have the freedom that was known 20 years ago and this impacts upon how much access children have to spaces outdoors that are safe and as a result we find the need for increased safety measures which protect but arguably restrict some of the freedom seen in other cultures from an education perspective in nature.

Q7: Which one best describes your provision?*



*There were many different names and types of settings provided. Nature Kindergarten stands also for nature groups and nature pre-schools. Forest Kindergarten stands also for friluftsbarnhage (in Norway) and outdoor nursery or outdoor pre-school. Other stands for the rest.

Q8: What type of base do you use?*



*Again, there is great variety in the types of bases nature kindergartens reside in. There are also country specifics, e.g. gapahuk, which is typical for Norway. We grouped the most common names and types together, mobile shelters fit to Cabin, hut, gapahuk category.

Q9: What is your legal and actual child/adult ratio?

	Legal ratio	Actual ratio
NORWAY	3 to 18; median 6	3 to 18; median 6
CZECH REPUBLIC	4 to 16; median 7	1 to 10; median 7
ENGLAND & SCOTLAND	2 to 13; median 8	2 to 10; median 8

Scotland

Scotland is very proud of its heritage. Many people feel a strong connection to the Celts and Nordic nations. Traditionally, people went hunting, fishing and grew crops. As the country has become more urbanised and 'indoor/technology focused' these traditions are slowly being lost and with it children's connection to Nature and independence. Scotland is proud to still have 'the right to roam' and walk the land. How parents were raised affects how they raise their children and as time progress people roam shorter and shorter distances from their homes.

There is a growing movement to re-engage children and families with nature and in the last few years several nature kindergartens have opened up and teachers/practitioners are receiving training in Forest School and outdoor learning good practice. The Care Inspectorate wrote *My World Outdoors* in 2016 encouraging practitioners to use out-

door spaces. There is reference to outdoor learning in a wide range of our guidance and policies, however it is not embedded, only referenced. From a personal perspective, we feel Czech Republic and Norway are not getting drawn into the 'blame culture' and worries of litigation that England and Scotland seem to be following. This often means that we are required to complete a lot more documentation to justify our practice than our colleagues, especially when it comes to Benefit Risk Assessment. This is the main difference, our climates and habitats are similar as is our ethos and approach to Nature pedagogy.

Norway

In Norway, there is a strong tradition of going out in nature with the whole family on the weekends throughout the Year. There is great pride in Norwegian history, which is based on nature and exploring new territories and land. References to the Vikings, strong and tough people living in a hard

land. There has been no real aristocracy in Norway. Norway has the "Allemannsretten" which means "all men's right to walk wherever they like". Recently there is more focus on adapting to and incorporating new cultures due to the new challenges on the traditions, with new inhabitants, and thereby new cultures coming in and trying to change Norwegian national heritage. However lots of people leave it up to the kindergartens to keep up the traditions. Norwegians have a relaxed attitude to risk, as they accept that one learns best through his/her own experience, which may include a few accidents or bumps.

In terms of education, Norway by law has the same regulations on playgrounds as the EU, but that doesn't include nature. Nature is seen as free space. Scandinavian countries see childhood as a valuable period in life which should not be filled with formal schooling at an early age. Children have their own rights, which is much criticized by groups in a lot of other countries and seen as being to protective and take away parental control. Norwegian kindergartens make a plan every three years, which is then reviewed and renewed every year. There is also an official activity plan which is very structured and formal to be made every year. There are special schemes on language and social skills. The Norwegian frame plan is in English translation available for download on the Nature Pedagogy website.

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the "love of nature" has recently been an object of several research projects and the topic of publications. Many people put nature at the top of their hierarchy of interests. However many of them consider nature as simply a place for recreation. In the past there was a massive tradition for weekend rambling and outing to huts and cottages. Since nature (namely forest land) is open to anybody, but rules do exist. After two decades of decline, environmental education became part of the curriculum starting from kindergartens to primary and secondary education. Environmental education is often not taken seriously, but on the other hand lots of schools go far beyond the official curriculum requirements.

The first nature kindergartens (forest kindergartens) emerged in the Czech Republic around 2010 being heavily inspired by the Scandinavian kindergartens and German Waldkindergartens. Soon after this the Czech Association of Forest Kindergartens was formed, now being an umbrella organisation of about 140 nature kindergartens. The Association focuses on sustaining quality of childcare in the nature kindergartens based on Quality Standards and Ethical Code of nature pedagogues defined and continuously updated by the members through work of Quality Group. It also supports new members founding new kindergartens providing them with know-how, education in quality and process management and peer-to-peer counselling. On the national level the Association boosts information on pre-school nature education to broad public and lobby for suitable legislation. This effort led to the new legal act recognising nature kindergartens by the Czech Ministry of Education in 2017.

Taking down the communism and opening up of the new possibilities finally brought variety to education. Parents are now facing many "alternative" ways of education, like Montessori, Waldorf, free schools, home-schooling, unschooling and many others. However each of the mentioned streams put focus on slightly different topics, many of them are more or less nature-friendly, in-

corporate real-situations learning, soft-skills like cooperation, communication, error-handling or self-assessment, which brings many parents back from their daily routine to spending more time with their children.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE FOUR COUNTRIES

In our context of being with children in and with the nature the most recognisable cultural difference stems from the national attitude to the nature. Even without considering variation in weather conditions and common definition of outdoors (e.g. garden, forest, beach, fjord etc.), we recognise different attitudes towards being outside. Namely the acceptance of nature kindergartens and importance of kindergartens in terms of the age of children attending the provisions, time spent in the kindergarten, percentage of male and female staff, qualifications among staff and numbers of staff in ratio to children

Focus on security and the importance of risk management is another broad area influencing the whole concept of exploring nature with children – besides various levels of statutory inspections and documentation there are certain activities that are viewed differently, probably due to culture, e.g. making and using fires and knives. This leads

us to various governmental or community regulations often described in national curriculum or other documents, which should be answering important questions like Why are we training the children? (speeding through life experiences)) or What level of physical progression and flexibility of problem solving in natural environment for both children and staff are we willing to utilise? This is often where we start and end when exploring of the nature pedagogy concept.

Financial issues (governmental or community support), ownerships, parent fees reflect the social structure, location of the kindergartens (rural or urban) influence the amount of nature based kindergartens. Of course, more kindergartens give more positive feedback and encourage the development of love for the nature in the whole society.

SIMILAR POSITIVE REGULATIONS

Having in mind all the above mentioned differences and varieties, we focused on similar positive regulations in the four countries which already do (or potentially could) influence the use of nature in their kindergartens. We describe this in the following table.

Each country made a description of how the regulations in their country influence the use of nature in their kindergartens.



NORWAY	CZECH REPUBLIC	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND
Kindergartens shall have the physical, social and cultural qualities that at any given time correspond to current knowledge.			
LOB/RFB	RVP/ŠVP	Physical, Social and Emotional Development are Prime areas of learning for young children. (Early Years Outcomes).	Curriculum guidance – Outcomes and experiences related to physical, social, culture, GIRFEC.
Children shall learn to protect the natural environment.			
RFB	RVP/ŠVP, QSLMŠ	EYFS – The world Principles of Early years – Enabling Environments. Use the local area for exploring both the built and the natural environment.	Science curriculum for excellence.
Outdoor play and activities are an important part of child culture that must be retained, regardless of the geographic and climatic conditions.			
RFB	ŠVP/QSLMŠ	Statutory welfare requirements for early years foundation stage Paragraph 3.58.	Build Ambition, C for E. Pre birth to 3.
Children shall have positive experiences of outdoor activities and being outdoors in different seasons.			
RFB	ŠVP/QSLMŠ	Statutory welfare requirements for early years foundation stage.	Building the ambition, pre birth to 3.
Children shall develop a love of using nature for exploration and physical challenges.			
RFB	ŠVP/QSLMŠ	No mention of love however Physical Development is a Prime Area of Learning in the early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, coming before literacy and maths development.	No mention of love.
The aim is for children to begin to understand the significance of sustainable development .			
RFB	RVP/ŠVP	Register with Eco Schools to support sustainability.	Separate curriculum guidance education for sustainable development- optional curriculum age 5+ and eco schools.
Children shall experience nature and a sense of wonder at the diversity of nature.			
RFB	ŠVP/QSLMŠ	EYFS –0 Dev matters-Principles. Make use of outdoor areas to give opportunities for investigations of the natural world.	
They shall experience joy at being in the natural world, and gain a fundamental understanding of nature , conservation and interaction in the natural world.			
RFB	RVP/ŠVP	Statutory welfare requirements for early years foundation stage Paragraph 3.58.	Curriculum for excellence science curriculum.
To experience and learn about animals and plants, and about their mutual dependence and importance to food production .			
RFB	RVP/ŠVP	Principles Unique child – Can talk about some of the things they have observed such as plants, animals, natural and found objects, showing care and concern for living things.	Curriculum for excellence science curriculum.

NORWAY	CZECH REPUBLIC	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND
Learn to observe , wonder, experiment, systematise, describe and talk about phenomena in the physical world.			
RFB	RVP/ŠVP	Talks about how things happen and why things work.	Curriculum for excellence science curriculum.
Instructions of how the staff is expected to practice on the Subjects.			
RFB	RVP/ŠVP, QSLMŠ	Early years degree covering principles of early years.	
Gain an understanding of how one can use the environment and countryside whilst also looking after it.			
RFB	ŠVP/QSLMŠ	EYFS – The world	

Table 2. Similar positive regulations in the four countries.

REMARKS TO THE TABLE SIMILAR POSITIVE REGULATIONS.

Scotland

Outdoors in mentioned and linked by these terms:

- the joy of being in outdoor environment in all weather,
- fine, gross and social skills,
- explore and comprehend risk,
- health- physical, emotional, mental,
- Development of Language (environmental print) and numeracy (texture, shape, climate, space).

Further information could be obtained on the Education Scotland website ([education.gov.scot](http://www.education.gov.scot)) and Care Inspectorate (www.careinspectorate.com).

Czech Republic

RVP stands for Curriculum of the Pre-School Education (*Rámcový Vzdělávací Program*), which is a broad national standard document (www.msmt.cz/file/39792) individually adopted by each of the kindergarten in the form of local educational standard (*Školní Vzdělávací Program*). Each kindergarten could thus focus on particular areas of the curriculum and differentiate itself from the other ones.

QSLMŠ stands for Quality Standards of the Forest Kindergartens (www.lesnims.cz/lesni-ms/standardy-kvality/obsah-standardu-kvality.html) together with Ethical Codex of the Nature Pedagogue (<http://www.lesnims.cz/stahnout-soubor?id=56>).

In this way "RVP" means "YES" and "ŠVP/QSLMŠ" means "Possibly YES, depending on the kindergarten."

England

EYFS is a curriculum for children aged 0-5 years in England (www.gov.uk/early-years-foundation-stage). Consists of Prime and Specific areas of learning. The Prime areas are the most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. The Specific area of Understanding the world supports experiences in and with nature/natural world. The EYFS has four themes that underpin all the guiding principles that we follow to ensure the child is a competent learner, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The four themes mention the outdoors and natural world as being necessary in best practice.

Norway

LOB stands for Lov om barnehager (*The Law on Kindergartens*) and the connected **RFB** – Rammeplan for barnehager (*Frame Plan*, www.udir.no/rammeplan) is regulating Norwegian kindergartens. It has a strong focus on use of nature environments and its influence on pedagogy.

RFB has a specially paragraph on Nature, Environment and Technology.

LOB – the children shall be able to develop their creative zest, sense of wonder and need to investigate. They shall learn to take care of themselves, each other and nature. The children shall develop basic knowledge and skills.

The Purpose Clause establishes the kindergartens' social mandate and the basic values that should form the foundation of the kindergartens.



SEVEN QUALITIES OF THE NATURE PEDAGOGUE

Excellent nature pedagogy practitioner qualities

QUALITIES THAT DEFINE AN EXCELLENT NATURE PEDAGOGY PRACTITIONER ACROSS COUNTRIES

Despite the many observed differences, we as a working group, developed and agreed upon seven criteria that define a nature pedagogue.

We have defined these seven qualities and hope they will help practitioners to evaluate their own practice. Many of the qualities interrelate and it is the combination of these that are found in a Nature Pedagogue.

Below we offer points to have in mind when rethinking qualities in nature pedagogy perspective. More could be found and studied in the footages from our settings, best practice videos and interviews of our

head-teachers, managers and nature pedagogues. We provide links to the publications on YouTube and our websites.

For each qualities we have noted words we would associate with this term to help you understand our thinking in defining this quality.

1. REFLECTIVE

The cycle of reflection: Facts, feelings, findings and future (by Roger Greenaway)

Planning, observation and assessment

Peer observation and support

Self-assessment

Supportive relationships

Looking internally, externally and beyond

2. OPEN NOT DOMINANT.

Responsive to child led learning

Not directive

Without fixed outcomes – still with intention, but open to opportunity

Following an interest, irrespective of time

Open body language – at the child's level, with eye contact

Allow the child to lead

When not teaching a specific skill set, learning together

Encouraging children to self-assess/ problem solve

Real listening to the child's 'voice'

Knowing when to interact and not interfere

Inclusive of alternative thoughts and ideas of children – Accepting that's children's thoughts do not always follow the intended line of enquiry

3. HAPPY AND SECURE OUTSIDE

Adult has a positive connection to the outdoors

Adults fully engaged in real interactions

Adult demonstrates calm and comfort

Adult is dressed appropriately for weather conditions

Having confidence in own skills and knowledge to feel secure in environment

4. SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE (SKILL SET)

Theory

Experience

Knowing the individual child well

Learn through exploration (adult and child) applying knowledge appropriately

Developing skills for appropriate intervention

Knowing when and how to use own knowledge to teach specific skills

Motivation for self-development

Relevant skills and knowledge vary in each country/culture

Good interpersonal skills

5. RESPECTFUL

Get to know children/ colleagues as individuals

Respect and care of nature / environment

Respectful to the children's play spaces and their property

Ask permission before action

Compromise/agree/discuss

Allow children to solve or attempt to solve own conflicts before stepping in

Thank others for thoughts, ideas and help

Help others to understand their place in nature

Value for the rights of the child

6. SYNERGY WITH NATURE

Official meaning: 'Interaction of elements that when combined, produces an affect greater than some individual parts'

Don't over take from nature; we have a balance of taking and giving

The setting will add value to the community, changing thoughts of the service users

Learning with nature, not just teaching about it

Following the seasons/elements

Complete cycle from start to finish (making charcoal, fishing, observing frogspawn to frogs)

Learning contrasts: Being cold and knowing how to get warm

Working with the environment, not against it – not always sticking to the plan

(e.g. still making kites even though it's a sunny calm day, just because it's in the planning)

7. COLLABORATION

Team work: team should support each other to make learning with and in nature work

It often takes a combined effort to achieve goals

Knowing the power of collaboration and when to use it in practice

Using individual strengths to reach the team's full potential

Negotiation and compromise that involves the voice of all

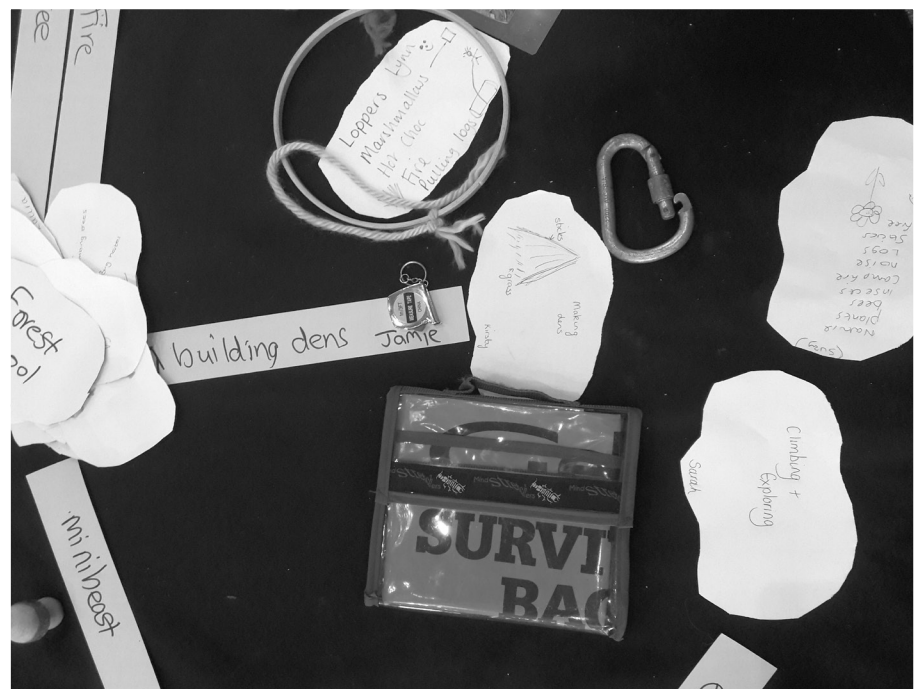
Sharing good practice with other across regions, countries etc.

Intuitive with colleagues

Trust other colleagues

Strong relationships with colleagues, children and families

Effective leadership that manages collaboration



NATURE PEDAGOGY

www.naturepedagogy.com/erasmus

FINAL OUTPUTS FROM OUR ERASMUS PROJECT

Website

The link www.naturepedagogy.com/erasmus guides you to the website where you can find the outputs of our Erasmus project. The PDF summary (about our settings and case studies of the qualities of a Nature Pedagogue) are also linked to our own individual websites. This webpage describes the project and the qualities of a nature pedagogue with accompanying film and PDF descriptors. The page has a link to each setting and a short description. In addition, you can download the document in which we have compared the similarities and differences between each country.

YouTube channel

The channel contains a video to demonstrate that children interact with nature in similar ways all over the world (a case study of Tree Climbing), video footages describing each participating kindergarten early years setting, case studies from each partner country showing video footage of good practice linked to the qualities of a Nature Pedagogue and interviews with staff from each partner country exploring the qualities that make a good Nature Pedagogue.

NATURE KINDERGARTENS – SETTINGS VIDEOS

Auchlone Nature Kindergarten, Scotland (Settings)

Link: <https://youtu.be/SxWIPeUu6x4>

Duration: 1:34

Description: Auchlone Nature Kindergarten is an award winning early years centre (for 2 to 5 year olds) based near Crieff in Scotland. The children spend over 80% of their time outdoors while at Auchlone. Being a nature kindergarten is so much more than that. Whether we are inside, outside or beyond, we use nature to learn and provide children with authentic opportunities that will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

In 2006 Mindstretchers opened the first outdoor Nature Kindergarten in Scotland, Whistlebrae. The site later moved to Auchlone Nature Kindergarten near Crieff, Scotland, in 2009. The implementation of the Nature Kindergarten philosophy has resulted in Auchlone being considered sector leading and recognised internationally. Over the last few years Auchlone has been a finalist and winner for many different awards, including NMT's Outdoor Learning Environment 2016 and Nursery World's Nursery of the Year 2016.

Boldon Nursery School – Outdoor Nursery, England (Settings)

Link: <https://youtu.be/XzsdFZRPlrY>

Duration: 2:05

Description: Boldon Nursery School-Outdoor Nursery is a Local Authority maintained nursery school, one of only 4 in our Local Authority and set in an area of high deprivation. The focus in all nursery schools is on narrowing the attainment gap between children to enable all children to have the best start

in life, making outstanding progress during their time in nursery. The school, by law, needs its own Headteacher, who is a qualified teacher with innovative Leadership and Management skills and a qualified teacher to lead the teaching and learning.

Our approach to learning outdoors is unique, and although some other settings offer 'forest school' sessions, there are very few nursery schools in the country who offers experiences outdoors for 80% or more of the time- in all weathers. In England, Nursery Schools are inspected by Ofsted to the same framework as Primary schools, carried out by Ofsted or HMI inspectors.

The school is currently judged to be outstanding for the second consecutive time, although we work in a way that is so different to everywhere else. This is because despite pushing the boundaries and following what we believe is right of young children, the teaching and learning is recognised as 'high quality' and 'innovative' seeing young children learn in nature without exception. In our culture, children being outside particularly in cold and wet conditions is not seen as 'acceptable' and in addition to that families and even professionals have great concerns over young children taking risks, due to significant health and safety restraints alongside 'a claim culture'. This making our daily practice very different and outside of the 'norm' in our country - something we are very proud of!

Hval Gård Naturbarnehage, Norway (Settings)

Link: <https://youtu.be/nhyJMrYm1es>

Duration: 1:25

Description: Hval Gård and Vepsebolet barnehager is community owned kindergartens run as one unit. Inside this Unit we find Hval Gård Naturbarnehage.

36 Children, aged 4-6 years are filling the groups. They have a base in purpose built buildings without electrical heating. They are all close to the forests and the sea. The Children and Staff are outside all year and all day. We are situated in some of the most picturesque areas of the Asker community, with short walks to public transport. We also have our own mini buses and boats to access sites further afield.

In our Kindergartens the Children learn that it is better to be outside than inside. In the last year before School, all the Children in Hval Gård barnehage attend the Nature-groups.

We follow the Asker Communities basic values; Openness, Credibility and Mutual Respect.

Lesní klub Jurta, Czech Republic (Settings)

Link: <https://youtu.be/BMOx4iXJimY>

Duration: 1:38

Description: The Jurta Nature Kindergarten opened in 2010 with a great contribution from parents. In 2013 we were legally registered by the Czech Ministry of Education. And in 2017, due to the national legal act recognising forest kindergartens in the Czech Republic, we became equal to the other ordinary kindergartens.

Jurta resides on a farm in the outskirts of Děčín in the north of the Czech Republic. The kindergarten is located in rural area surrounded with forests, meadows and rivers. There are pigs, cattle, geese, donkeys and sheep on the farm. The children encounter the life and work on the farm every day. They can observe the work on a farm, help feeding animals and learn about everyday

life of the animals during the whole year.

As a base we use a wooden furnished hut equipped with a stove and a large bunk bed for the youngest children to have an afternoon nap. In the base there is everything we need to keep the children comfortable, e.g. extra clothes, tools, games, books and other teaching aids. There is a large garden with a place for fire, spaces for play in nature and an orchard next to the base.

There are 30 registered children aged 3-6 years old and 5 qualified staff teachers in the kindergarten. There is also a primary school in the farm area and school-children regularly meet their friends from the kindergarten when they go to school.

CASE STUDIES ON NATURE PEDAGOGY

Q1 Reflective: Reflecting on Family Books and Learning Stories (Case Study)

Link: <https://youtu.be/FFwzMgOKc5A>

Duration: 3:11

Description: Seven Qualities of the Nature Pedagogue: 1 Reflective

The footage shows children reflecting with staff upon previous experiences that are documented in their Family Books (individual Learning Journal). They recall experiences and plan for the future using this methodology at Auchlone Nature Kindergarten.

The staff work with the children to create their own Family Book; these are compiled chronologically using Learning Stories to record their time at Auchlone Nature Kindergarten. These books document an individual child's learning alongside Talking and Thinking Floorbooks (the group learning experiences). Staff use Floorbooks and Family Books as a reflective tool to evaluate past experience and embed prior learning (Metacognition). They are also used to plan future experiences.

Qualities demonstrated

Reflective - Looking back and sharing memories and having further thoughts using the photographs and quotes from the children's

family books to stimulate discussion.

Collaboration - The staff share the facilitation role of discussion, helping children question and evaluate their own learning.

Skills and knowledge - Children and staff share their knowledge – both vocabulary and understanding.

Q2 Open, not Dominant: Tree Climbing (Case Study)

Link: <https://youtu.be/lkxbm7v1JfE>

Duration: 6:10

Description: This footage demonstrates how the practitioner can support children on their climbing journey at Boldon Nursery School-Outdoor Nursery.

Tree climbing is physical learning for a child at its best. This experience demonstrates the control and strength children can achieve with practice and freedom to explore.

Before they will ever be able to hold a pencil and write with control, a child at this age needs to have full control over their bodies and strength in their core muscles - arms, shoulders, joints and coordination are key if they will ever hold a pen or pencil comfortably - skills for life that will transfer to many other experiences.

Qualities demonstrated

Open, not dominant - The adults body language is supportive and not overpowering - not having the answers or inductions but supporting the child to challenge themselves.

Happy and secure outside - Sam uses her own passion for tree climbing as a child to inspire her practice.

Synergy with nature - Sam encourages the children to listen to nature, feel the elements and take full advantage of the new perspective.

Collaboration - The staff work supportively to ensure they work in areas they feel strong and passionate.

Q3 Happy And Secure Outside: Skiing Activities (Case Study)

Link: <https://youtu.be/sQbQjPS8DFQ>

Duration: 6:58

Description: Seven Qualities of the Nature Pedagogue: 3. Happy and secure outside

This footage demonstrates how children are enjoying the playful activities of cross-country skiing at Hval Gård barnehage.

The children begin their skiing journey moving on flat ground, then mastering small slopes up and down, learning how to manage their bodies and coordinate their movements.

Qualities demonstrated

Happy and secure outside - The adults body language is supportive and not overpowering - not having the answers or inductions. They are standing out as good models and supporting the child to challenge themselves.

Skills and knowledge - The adult is just helping and Gently guiding when the children need it. There are no "screaming" instructors. The adult let the child lead its own way, based on looking at others and asking for guidance when needed.

Collaboration - The adults are aware that they must be observant and follow up every child individually. In most cases they divide the children between them before the activity.

Q4 Skills and Knowledge: Inspiring Young Writers — Making Charcoal (Case Study)

Link: <https://youtu.be/nGBngPVQJdc>

Duration: 5:09

Description: Seven Qualities of the Nature Pedagogue: Q4 Skills and Knowledge

This footage demonstrates how the practitioner supports a child to light the fire and make charcoal in Boldon Nursery School outdoor nursery.

This is an experience that the children are part of from very early in their journey. After establishing respect and understanding for the fire, and confidence in their ability to light it and manage the risk we begin to use it for a purpose, whether that is cooking, keeping warm or creating.

In this example the experience develops many skills, alongside inspiring children to write with their own pencil.

Qualities demonstrated

Skills and knowledge - Supporting children to learn new skills through demonstrating, but also encouragement to explore and find out. Adults have visible skills and know how to support individuals appropriately.

Open, not dominant - In the footage Sam allows the child time and space to explore.

Happy and secure outside - All aspects of nature and the elements are embraced and brought to the child's attention.

Reflective - Sam summarizes the key learning experiences and creates possible lines of development as she works.

Q5 Respectful: Working with Tools – Knives & Saws (Case Study)

Link: <https://youtu.be/k6FzaW37yUU>

Duration: 2:50

Description: Seven Qualities of the Nature Pedagogue: 5 Respectful

This footage demonstrates a child's resilience and determination to achieve a goal with appropriate support at Jurta Nature Kindergarten.

The kids learn how to work with the real tools. They learn how to treat the tools safe and with respect.

Qualities demonstrated

Respectful - Support in mastering the work with knife and saw. Sensitive guiding of the kids.

Skills and knowledge - The kids learn how to work with a knife and a saw. They learn how to recognize the wood suitable to work with.

Open, not dominant - Adults offer an advice, but instead of instructing they respect the kids' choice and are available to them for support. The kids enjoy their space.

Q6 Synergy with Nature: Producing Elderflower Syrup (Case Study)

Link: <https://youtu.be/h6d7uOpJaW8>

Duration: 2:42

Description: Seven Qualities of the Nature Pedagogue: 6 Synergy with Nature

This footage demonstrates the use of nature as a food source and the importance of showing children how knowledge and understanding helps us forage for useful materials to be self sustaining at Jurta Nature Kindergarten

Using the gifts of nature – the kids learn that we can take the gifts of nature in a reasonable quantity and we can use it to produce edible and delicious things. Syrup, juice, tea and other delicacies. When we are here for the nature, the nature is here for us. We can learn about the nature while touching it, smelling it and also while viewing the books about it.

Qualities demonstrated

Synergy with nature - The kids learn how to observe the nature and their surroundings. They try to find out the information about nature. We use the gifts of nature to produce an elderflower syrup.

Skills and knowledge - The kids learn how to produce the elderflower syrup. They search the information in the book.

Respectful - We learn how to respect the nature and not to take more than we need. We respect each other while working. The kids are free to ask for some support in case of need.

Q6 Synergy with Nature: Fishing (Case Study)

Link: https://youtu.be/uGN__nh9FGIA

Duration: 2:38

Description: Seven Qualities of the Nature Pedagogue: 6 Synergy with Nature

This footage demonstrates a nature pedagogue and children going fishing at Hval Gård kindergarten.

This experience is important because it is an old Norwegian tradition to collect food and live by nature since the Vikings lived in this area. The environment around the kindergarten makes it very natural to go fishing with the kids.

And it is important for the children to learn how and where you can catch the fish.

Qualities demonstrated

Synergy with nature - Norwegians have a strong tradition in being in synergy with nature. Main focus is to live by nature.

Skills and knowledge - The pedagogues uses they're passion for fishing, to inspire the children and supply their knowledge to this old tradition.

Feel at home in nature - The staff loves being outside, learning and sharing knowledge about the Norwegian traditions.

Respectful - Being in and with nature, inspire the children in collecting food from nature and see the whole process.

Q7 Collaboration: Benefit Risk Assessment (Case Study)

Link: <https://youtu.be/ou1DOh6XHU5>

Duration: 4:19

Description: Seven Qualities of Nature Pedagogue: 7 Collaboration - Teamwork

The footage shows staff and children working collaboratively together to Benefit Risk Assess the experience of visiting a burn (stream) to have a boat race at Auchlone Nature Kindergarten.

At Auchlone Nature Kindergarten we use Benefit Risk Assessment. Risk assessing in the past focused on removal of risk and was often undertaken by the adult. In Benefit Risk Assessment we aim to reduce risk to as safe level but not remove it entirely. By involving children in Benefit Risk Assessment they are aware of the dangers and how they will stay safe.

Qualities demonstrated

Skills and knowledge - Give children the skills to identify the positives of an experience, the hazards or associated risks and the precautions to keep us safe.

Open, not dominant - Allowing children to discuss and identify their own precautions to stay safe.

Happy and secure outside - When we know how to stay safe, it reassures us and we become happy and content in our environment.

Respectful - Encourage children to self risk assess.

BEST PRACTICE IN NATURE PEDAGOGY – INTERVIEWS

Tree Climbing: Children interact with nature in similar ways all over the world

Link: https://youtu.be/yKS3wo__cKSQ

Duration: 1:26

Q1 Reflective: How well do you identify your strength and challenges? (Interviews)

Link: <https://youtu.be/l6PvZK617ZY>

Duration: 1:23

Q2 Open, not Dominant: Are you teaching the child or learning alongside the child? (Interviews)

Link: <https://youtu.be/cmL0mrhVgkc>

Duration: 1:07

Q3 Happy & Secure Outside: How do you develop emotional

attachment to the outdoors? (Interviews)

Link: <https://youtu.be/AahTU07TX3Y>

Duration: 1:36

Q4 Skills and Knowledge: What skill or piece of knowledge will you acquire now? (Interviews)

Link: <https://youtu.be/X6FVQq-0HMK>

Duration: 1:44

Q5 Respectful: How do you show respect to others and your environment? (Interviews)

Link: <https://youtu.be/yfY2qHFGQkM>

Duration: 1:51

Q6 Synergy with Nature: As a human being do you know you are a part of nature? (Interviews)

Link: <https://youtu.be/hPJzrviWRfc>

Duration: 1:03

Q7 Collaboration: How do you ensure the best possible interactions between children? (Interviews)

Link: <https://youtu.be/ssir9OcLbh0>

Duration: 3:26

Passion for Nature

Link: <https://youtu.be/IlxhVNFzW8s>

Duration: 4:16

Similarities between Countries

Link: <https://youtu.be/jSjlluv7O40>

Duration: 1:50

Rights of the Child: Every child has a right to be in and use the nature.

Link: <https://youtu.be/jOaTKeZ0dCc>

Duration: 0:21

