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## PRINCIPLES OF FOREST/NATURE SCHOOL

*We define Forest/Nature School as an educational ethos and practice that centres the Land and the child-at-play. Children and educators build a relationship with the Land through regular and repeated access to the same outdoor space over an extended period of time. Educators support learning through a pedagogical framework that is rooted in place and play, directed and inspired by the child (emergent curriculum), and driven by a process of inquiry.*

### Forest/Nature School is founded on three pillars:

- Trust
- Reciprocal Relationships
- Freedom

### Forest/Nature School (FNS):

1. Takes place in any outdoor space, including urban greenspace, playgrounds, forests, creeks, prairies, mountains, shoreline, and tundra.
2. Is a sustained process of regular and repeated sessions in the same outdoor space, supporting children to develop a reciprocal relationship with the Land, and an understanding of themselves as a part of the natural world.
3. Views children and youth as innately competent, curious, and capable learners.
4. Is led by educators who share power with learners through play-based, emergent, and inquiry-driven teaching and learning methods.





5. Values children's play - self-directed, freely chosen, intrinsically motivated<sup>1</sup> - in and of itself. FNS programs provide adequate time and space for children and youth to dive deeply into their play.
6. Views risky play as an integral part of children's learning and healthy development, and is facilitated by knowledgeable, qualified educators who support children and youth to co-manage risk.
7. Relies on loose, natural materials to support open-ended, creative play and learning.
8. Values the *process* as much as the *outcome*.
9. Prioritizes building reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, who have been learning from this Land since time immemorial.
10. Practices, policies, and programming reflect and prioritize the building of engaged, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities through consideration of access and equity in our decisions and actions.



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<sup>1</sup> Play Wales. <https://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playinghangingout>