

**A Practitioner's Guide
to
OUTDOOR PLAY BASED LEARNING**
**Home-schooling Ideas
For Outdoor Learning**
Thrive Outdoors

Top Tips for Incorporating Outdoor learning into your home-schooling schedule!

Once again we all find ourselves in the midst of another lockdown with the prospect of becoming 'teacher' as well as parent again seeming rather daunting to many of us. But fear not the Thrive Outdoors team are on hand with some tips and resources to help make home-schooling MORE fun (and of course educational) for everyone! We are sharing 4 activities -one for each 'school' day. These activities are brilliant for breaking up the day and getting everyone outdoors away from the screens!

School Day 1-Create your own wildlife and nature map

This activity works best in a woodland area or nature trail but it can even be adapted for your back garden. Get the kids involved in sketching out what they come across in the trail. They can mark on their 'map' where they see birds or maybe there's some mushrooms growing in a certain area. As you walk along the trail you can mark all the interesting things you see in nature.

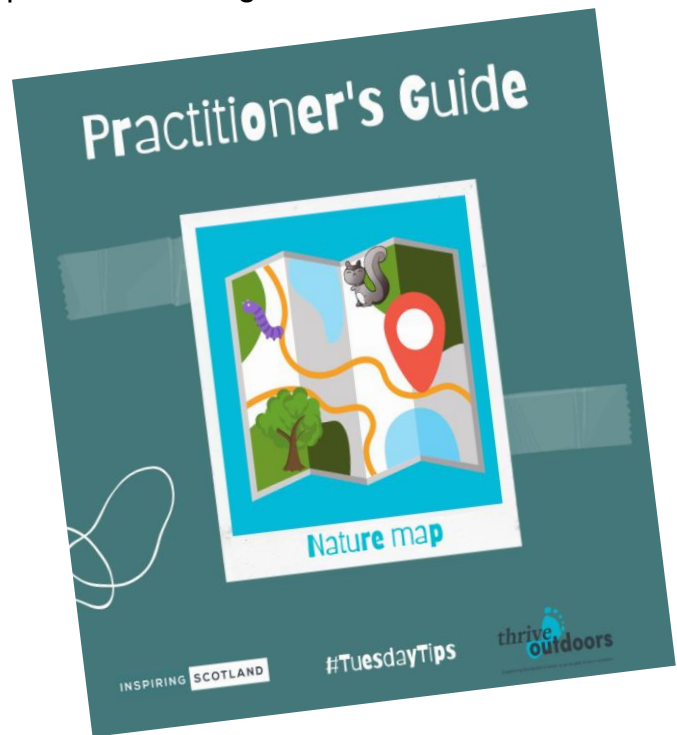
What you'll need

- Paper or card (this will be your map) can be any colour- but preferably a good weight of paper to withstand it being taken outside.
- Pens or pencils
- Print outs of any guides on species identification (although this is optional)

How to do:

Start by packing everything you need-let the children pack their own bags and make it exciting, everyone is off on a mini adventure!

1. Find a place to sit and block out the trail route on the map with your pens and pencils on the your paper. Add some green areas where the trees are or some blue areas where a river might be.. Or it's also fun just to draw what's there as you walk along. If you get to an area of trees -draw the trees in or draw where the river runs.
2. Next look out for any wildlife and get everyone to draw on their map where they seen the squirrel or rabbit or deer.
3. It doesn't matter if you don't see any wildlife you can mark anything interesting in nature- perhaps it's some mushrooms growing near a specific tree at the start of the trail or a interesting tree at the end.
4. As you go along your trail mark out all the wonderful things you see in nature.
5. Look at your species guide printouts to learn the different types of species you see or research it when you get home
6. Next week -do the same trail and bring your map to see what's new or what's grown or changed!



Handy hint: you can have categories and create different maps for different things

- A wildlife map marking all the animals you see
- A bug map marking all the interesting bugs you see
- A plant map marking the various plants you see

Learning outcomes: a chance for children to get creative, learn basic mapping skills and observation skills while also developing research and knowledge skills on local wildlife and nature.

School Day 2- Numbers in Nature

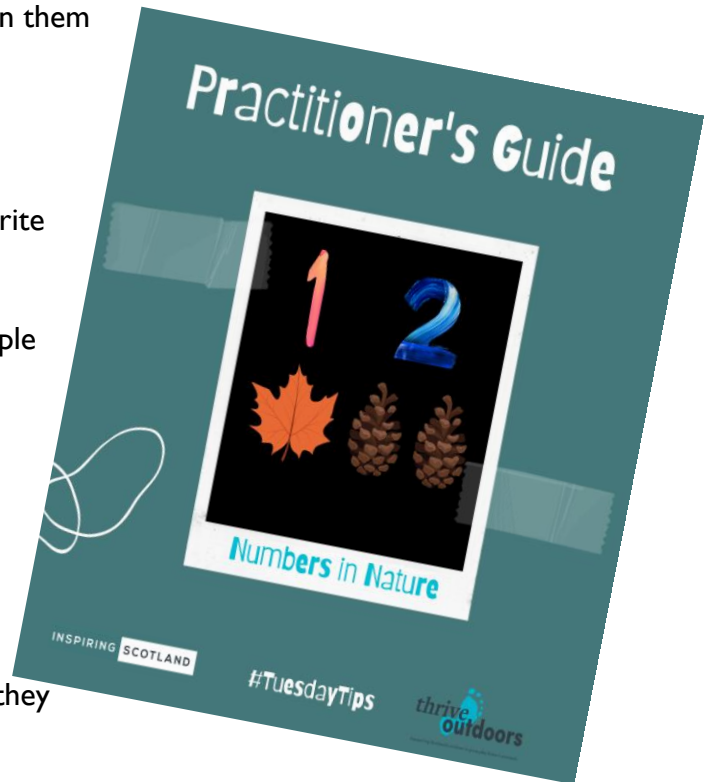
Get some maths and numeracy into the day while also being in nature.

What you'll need

- Chalk or printed paper with Numbers on them
- Any materials in nature that you find- pinecones, sticks etc

How to do:

1. Lay the number out on the ground or write them on chalk in your garden
2. Encourage the children to find different materials of a certain number. For example '2 pinecones', '3 leaves'
3. Only take things which can be found on the ground
4. You can get creative and make simple maths problems for the children to solve
For example 2 pinecones plus 3 sticks equals to how many leaves? and the children can find how ever many leaves they believe to be correct for the sum.



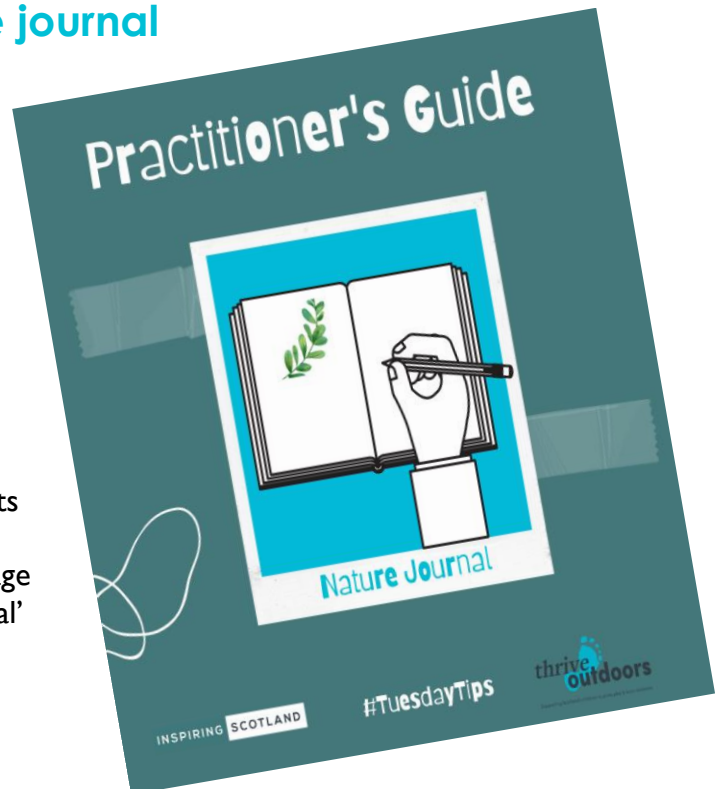
Learning outcomes: Numeracy and problem solving skills

School day 3- Keep a nature journal

Encourage the children to keep a nature journal. This one is a good one to do get children reflecting. Children can write down what they see in nature in detail. They can write down as much detail as possible based on what they see and observe in nature. Or journal some creative stories based on something they have seen or experienced in nature.

What you'll need

- A journal or simply staple together lots of sheets of paper to make a journal (this is good because you can encourage them to decorate their 'Nature Journal' front cover)
- Pen or pencil



Journal prompts

- What can you see today when outside? Can you write down the colours? Shapes? Patterns? Size?
- Make up a fun adventure story based of an animal you seen in nature? Give your character a name – what did they look like? what did they do? What was their adventure?
- How many birds do you see? Can you describe them?
- What colour was the mushroom? Did it have it any interesting patterns?

Learning outcomes: Develops writing and reflection skills as well as creativity and imagination!

School day 4- Create a animal den

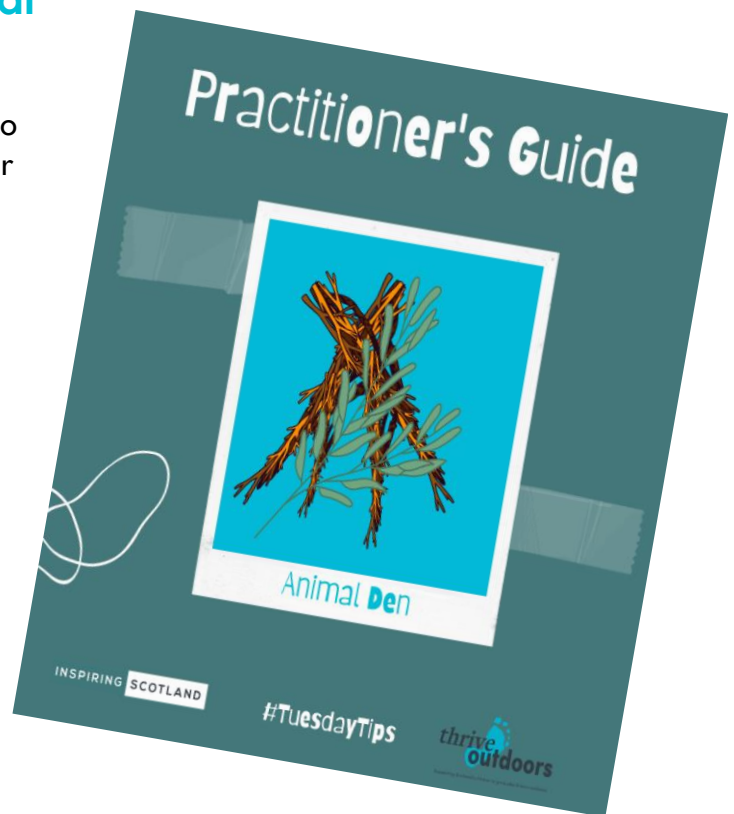
Can you forage for lots of different materials to create a den and home for local wildlife in your garden or out in nature.

What ll you need

- Materials found in nature

How to do:

1. Forage for lots of different materials found in nature -think sticks,leaves,dirt
2. Gather them in a big pile and begin to build a twig or stick den
3. Build the twigs up and add leaves over the top to make the 'roof'
4. Add some dirt and other foraged materials to make it more homely for the wildlife and critters.



Handy tip: Create different sized dens for different sized wildlife!

Learning outcomes: Building something from scratch with just the materials found in nature helps with problem solving skills.

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Useful Links

Our handy hints and tips on #outdoorplay

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