

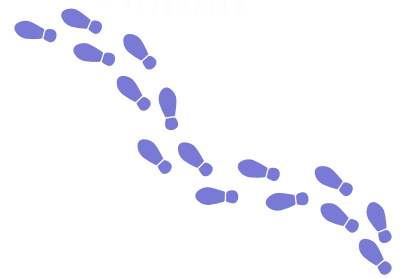
## FEELINGS INSPECTORS RESOURCE

### Self Care

# Nurture in Nature

## About this activity

This activity helps children to explore how they feel when they are outdoors. It allows them to discuss how being outdoors encourages us to explore and teaches mindfulness in a completely natural way. Making art in nature improves attention deficit difficulties and boosts both emotional and physical wellbeing. Nature-based self-care is also associated with lower levels of stress, depression, and anxiety and being outdoors helps us feel more connected to the world. Nature engages all our senses and allows us to engage with our surroundings and let our minds wander freely.



## What do we need?

Fresh air and the outdoors! Wellies and jackets if it's raining. If possible, a woodland or park visit is ideal for this activity, but it can also easily be done in a playground.

## Check-in

At Children's Parliament, we start every session with a check-in. Children love these short activities, and they are a vital piece of our rights-based practice. Choose a check-in using our [Feelings Inspectors Check-in Kit](#).

## Nurture in nature

### Instructions

Set parameters for the outdoor space. Within these parameters ask the children to go off on their own and explore for five minutes and to go on a nature scavenger hunt to see what they can find to bring back and share with the group. Although five minutes is a minimum, try to allow as much time as possible for this activity to really give the children a chance to explore and examine their surroundings. Come together again to explore what has been found and ask if anyone knows the names of any plants and which ones are edible and/or have other uses. If any insects are brought to the group, make sure they are returned to where they were found.



Next, ask the children to work together to make a collaborative piece of nature art using their found "treasure". Explain that the children have completely free rein in what they make and allow time for discussion and negotiation. Some may need encouragement to explore and to get their hands dirty, as many children are not used to free play in the outdoors.

Free play in nature is the best way for children to learn about the benefits of the outdoors to mental health and wellbeing. Don't be discouraged by rain which provides opportunities for puddle splashing and mud play. Wind and snow bring further opportunities.

**Top tip**

## Nurture in nature

At the end of the session ask the children how they felt outdoors and discuss how being outdoors encourages us to explore and teaches mindfulness in a completely natural way. A group discussion at the end of the session about how free play in nature feels is all that is needed to convey the above for this activity.



“ Being outside reminds you to be kind to yourself as it’s peaceful, so you can think better. ”

“ Sorting nature that you’ve found is like sorting out your emotions. ”

Planting flowers or seeds, using recycled paper plant pots and soil can be a nice addition to this session. Ask the children what plants need to so they can thrive and flourish, then ask what children need to thrive and flourish. The children can take the pots home to nurture them as a reminder to nurture their own wellbeing. A layer of used tea leaves will help feed the plants and stop bugs eating the leaves.

More  
ideas

## A mindful moment

At Children's Parliament, we end every session with a mindful moment to reflect on the session and wind-down. Choose a mindful moment using our [Feelings Inspectors Mindful Moment Kit](#).

