



**LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
OUTCOMES ASSIGNMENT**

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Many Forest schools provide ample space for energetic play, which helps children to develop strength, coordination, and dexterity. Activities include climbing, building, and balancing on logs.

Whilst I could not provide the breadth of activities that some providers do at our Hullard Park location, I was able to facilitate the physical activity that the children were lacking in their nursery establishment. We walked to the park and they were free to run in the large open spaces there during the games that we played. We also explored areas as a group as part of our activities - collecting natural items or observing wildlife. At the end of each session the children were tired, they had enjoyed themselves and had physically challenged themselves too, which is wonderful for their wellbeing. In addition to developing their resilience and strength it also gave them a sense of accomplishment - despite perhaps finding it difficult at times they had persevered. Specifically, the walk home as they had exerted themselves but still had to carry on walking to reach our destination.

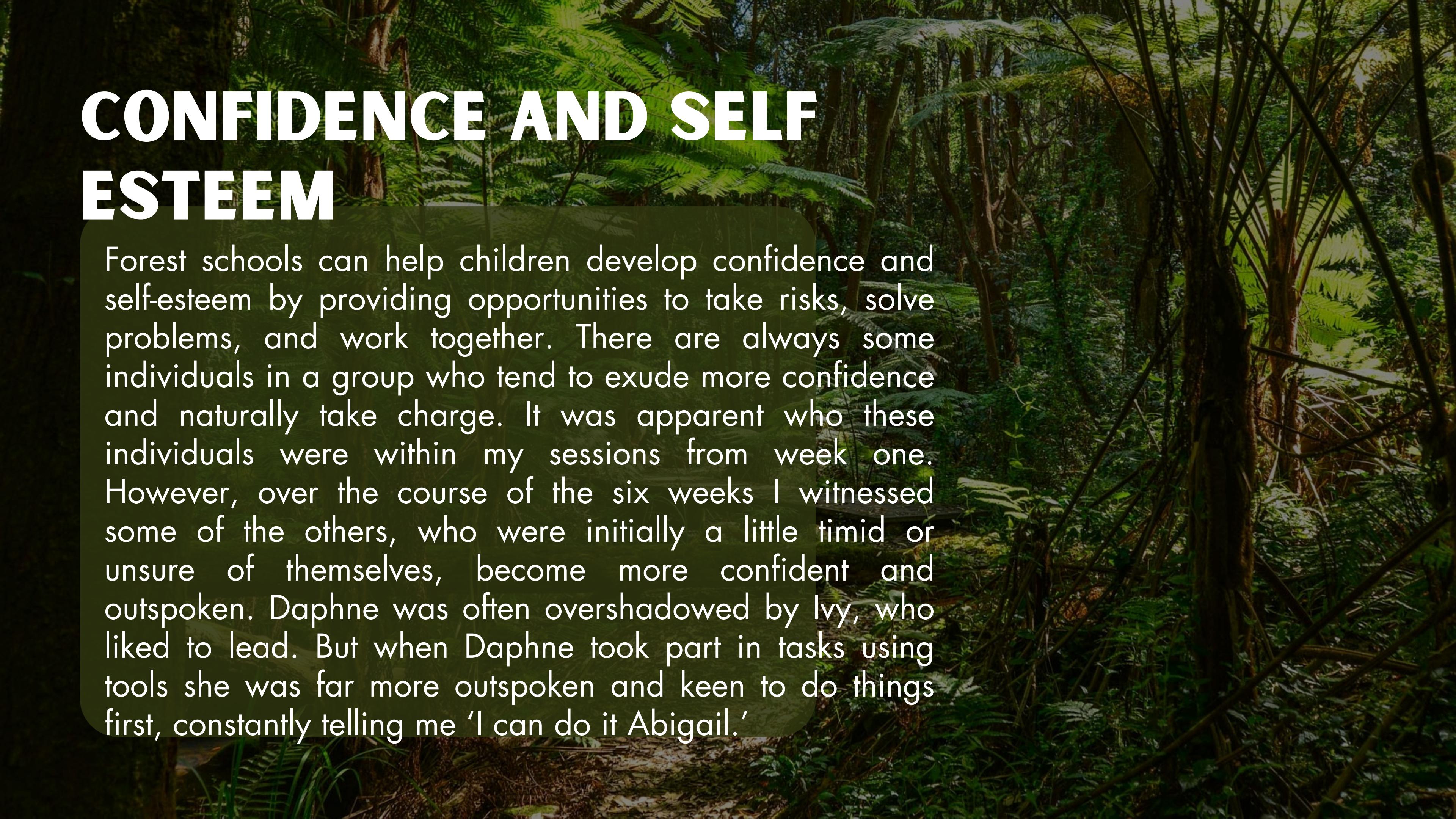
WELLBEING

When I'm out in the natural environment - taking a hike or walking beside a river, canal, stream or ocean, I feel a sense of calm and peace. I am focused on my surroundings, it enables me to be mindful and I have greater clarity as my mind is not filled with the 'busy-ness' of my everyday life. This is the same experience that I wanted the children to have. Forest School almost becomes a form of escapism as they engage in activities that are not measured or graded and they have greater choice over what those activities are.

In a dedicated space - one that is enclosed and inaccessible to the general public with a variety of equipment and stations, I know that I could have extended this experience for them.

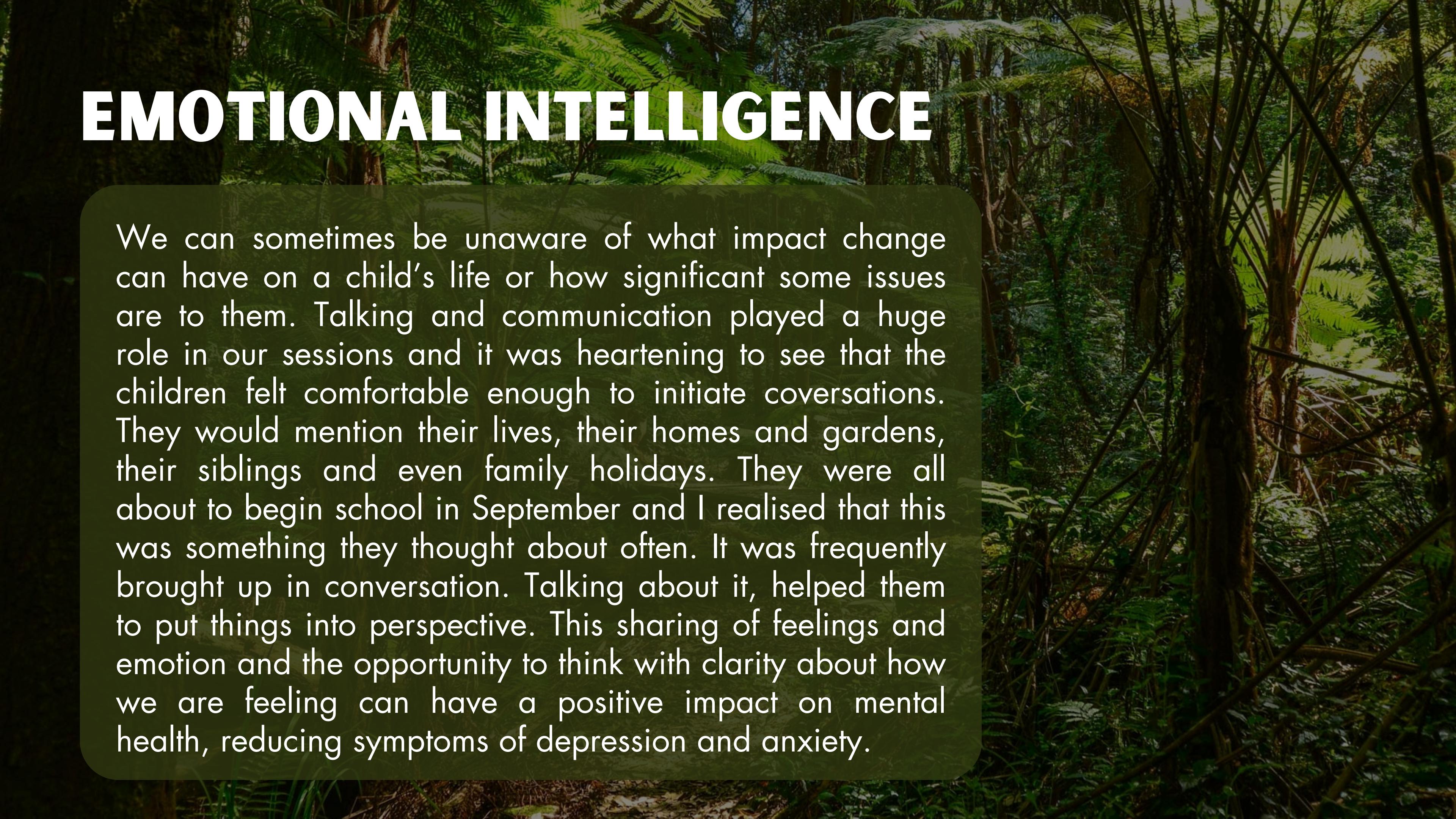
On the following page I will expand upon the observations that I made about wellbeing during the six sessions that I facilitated.

CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM



Forest schools can help children develop confidence and self-esteem by providing opportunities to take risks, solve problems, and work together. There are always some individuals in a group who tend to exude more confidence and naturally take charge. It was apparent who these individuals were within my sessions from week one. However, over the course of the six weeks I witnessed some of the others, who were initially a little timid or unsure of themselves, become more confident and outspoken. Daphne was often overshadowed by Ivy, who liked to lead. But when Daphne took part in tasks using tools she was far more outspoken and keen to do things first, constantly telling me 'I can do it Abigail.'

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



We can sometimes be unaware of what impact change can have on a child's life or how significant some issues are to them. Talking and communication played a huge role in our sessions and it was heartening to see that the children felt comfortable enough to initiate conversations. They would mention their lives, their homes and gardens, their siblings and even family holidays. They were all about to begin school in September and I realised that this was something they thought about often. It was frequently brought up in conversation. Talking about it, helped them to put things into perspective. This sharing of feelings and emotion and the opportunity to think with clarity about how we are feeling can have a positive impact on mental health, reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety.

RESILIENCE

Forest School Leaders create challenges for children, just as nature does, all within a safe environment. In a forest school setting, there is ample opportunity to teach children how to navigate difficult situations. If something isn't working for them or they struggle to understand, there's no national curriculum dictating when to move on; they can revisit the issue in the next session and explore alternative methods. The key is to remain calm and approachable, a lesson I learned from Lily. In turn, the children will adopt similar coping strategies. Disappointment, failure, and setbacks are part of life, much like rain. When they encounter these challenges, they can adapt, learn to manage them, or view them from a different perspective. This is why the children handled a heavy downpour so well while participating in their activities.



SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Maya began her journey as a child who lacked self-assurance, but her transformation at Forest School involved much more than simply gaining confidence. She seemed to cultivate a sense of certainty about herself and embraced her unique way of being. As a serious-natured girl, she always sought to ensure that she was on the right track, which often caused her anxiety. However, throughout the six-week program, it became clear that she became more comfortable with change and uncertainty. She thrived in every game we played and received praise for her skills, reinforcing her accomplishments and allowing her to feel like an 'expert' in areas where she might not have otherwise. Reflecting on these achievements through end-of-session reviews, celebrating her successes, and bringing home items to showcase to her family all contributed to shaping how Maya perceives herself.



INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Children possess a natural curiosity that can sometimes be stifled in mainstream education. With a typical class size of 30 students, it can be challenging to address every question. However, as educators, we recognise that this deeper level of learning tends to become more ingrained. At Forest School, we empower children to explore and discover independently, encouraging them to ask countless questions and guide their learning toward what fascinates them most at that moment. When they pose questions, learning becomes a shared experience, fostering a culture of collaboration that allows them to learn from each other.

- Direct their own learning
- Manage their own risks.
- Conduct their own self-care routines.
- Learn through first-hand experiences with natural resources.
- Encouraged to explore and affirm what works in a system.
- Children learn through visual stimuli, sounds, smells, and tastes.
- Children learn to make decisions with their peers and deal with the consequences together.
- Leaders observe children and offer opportunities based on their interests and motivations.

CREATIVITY

The natural environment provides children with a wide range of materials to inspire their creativity and imagination. The simple act of picking up an object and then pretending that it is something else is being creative. Children do this when they are at play - an activity they will often not associate with learning. In fact, they are learning how to stretch their imaginations, use higher-order cognitive skills, use critical and divergent thinking and form original ideas. Being original and developing their own ideas is encouraged by Forest School Leaders.

Children often want the opportunity to express this originality and when they discover that Forest School positively encourages this they are often in their element.

Forest School crafts are a wonderful part of the whole experience and children are able to create things using natural resources in their sessions.

They also learn how to solve problems creatively through play in the forest. How to avoid getting wet, can they cross the stream or skim stones across a river.