



Make time



Our world seems to value being busy, rushing around, having one hundred things on the go at once. Using the natural landscape around us can help ease anxieties and help us slow down for our own wellbeing. **James Boddey**, director of Busy Bodies shares his views.

I want to explain the main themes of time and reflect on the benefits for children and the benefits for us as adults. Children can teach us a lot about life and how recognising this beautiful quality of slowing down, of enjoying life, of really seeing and appreciating things is a lesson for us all.

Time in Nature

Nature is the perfect classroom and the ideal place for young children to be. There is no other place that can both calm and stimulate the senses. Nature changes with the seasons and is different every minute of the day just as we are. It is growing, adapting and in a continual state of flow. When we walk peacefully through a forest, turn over a rock to find the insects underneath or see our seeds growing we have the opportunity to connect with nature.

Children's self-directed outdoor play provides opportunities for developing initiative, persistence, invention and problem solving. All skills that are the foundation for academic and life success. We are not just outside for certain times of the day, we are outside whenever they choose to be outside. No time limits, instead opportunity, exploration and wonder.

Time to connect with nature, gaze in awe at its wonder, fill the senses with everything nature has to offer, understand the cycles and systems of

nature and how we are all connected in this world.

Time for Childhood

We believe that childhood is not to be rushed. We believe that childhood is a time to foster wonder, creativity and discovery through play and exploration. The outdoors can provide the perfect environment for children to grow and thrive. When you observe children playing totally free you observe that they do not rush, they take their time, and they are fully present in what they are doing. Instead of recognising this beautiful quality of slowing down, of enjoying life, of really seeing and appreciating things, we encourage them to rush through it. To think in adult ways. Given the perfect environment, love, care and patience children will grow to their own unique full potential.

Pre-school is not school. Children will have lots of time for adult led activities and focused learning activities. We want them to have the time to explore their own ideas and enjoy every moment. We want them to develop self-confidence, self-awareness and self-worth. We want them to be developing inter-personal skills, emotional intelligence and empathy.

Are they able to express their needs, likes, dislikes and opinions verbally, with value and respect for others?

Are they independent with a thirst for learning? We want children to enjoy learning and feel empowered and driven to ask questions, find out more and be inquisitive.

We should give childhood back to our children and stop trying to turn children into adults before they are ready. Time to be, time to cherish the moment and time to experience things for the first time.

Time for Exploration

We believe that we learn best and develop as unique individuals only when we have the time to explore. Exploring our ideas, thoughts and feelings is the first step in reflecting and growing. We will create an environment that allows children time to explore at their own pace both indoors and outdoors.

Quality education is about relationships. Caring teachers who understand child development and who know and are attuned to the children in their care. When children have these relationships, they feel secure and able to explore to their full potential. It is only when you feel safe and secure that you are able to build confidence, awareness and grow.

Rich, open-ended conversation is critical, and children need time in the day to experience warm, empathic oral language. Through conversations with others they learn to stop and make time to listen. Listening is one of the greatest skills a child can learn. As through listening to others we can better understand them and support them.

Time to explore the world and our relationships with others. Time to build our skills but also recognise the important role others can play in helping us develop. Time to listen and truly hear each other. ■

