

Utilising outdoor space to promote children's curiosity.

Practitioners' perception of risks and opportunities for children and adults

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Theoretical framework

- Research by Kenny (2010) and Knight (2009, 2010, 2011) suggests that Forest School contributes to the improvement of 3-5 year olds well-being and educational involvement, as measured by the Leuven Scale.
- Ord&Leather (2011) and Leather (2012) argue that a successful Forest School experience underpins the role of the teacher as an organiser of activities to support children to discover their own learning. This is in line with Dewey's cycle experience-reflection-meaning making (Dewey,1938/1998).
- Forest School should be creative, trust children's agency and facilitate experiences rather than control them (Holdsworth,2005).

EYFS

- Environmental education in the EYFS

Forest School: the ethos

Forest School experience offers opportunity to explore natural outdoor and woodland spaces to naturally provoke

- **mindfulness and self-awareness**
- **living in the ‘here and now’ – space & place**
- **awareness & management of the environment, self and, others**
- **enhance self-confidence, perseverance, autonomy, resilience, accountability, naturalness and reflection**
- **enable individuals to face challenges, take risks and get to know ‘self’**
- **Natural resources and phenomenon are explored such as space, time and our senses to adapt sensitively to environments and situations (EI EL)**

Forest School: the ethos

- **Individual interpretation, self and creativity are enhanced during activities that include natural environmental art and expression, den building, survival strategies, tool use, observation, sensory and tactile exploration, cooking and identification of plants and wildlife.**
- **FS Programmes require trained practitioners to design, plan, create and deliver ‘real’ opportunities for explorers to celebrate the whole child and ‘self’. Emotional Intelligence and literacy underpin FS programme led via five points of self-awareness, regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. FS practitioners will undertake observation, recording, evaluation of skills and outcomes to support learning to learn opportunities and experiences to develop and celebrate the ‘whole self’.**
- **Individuals are provoked to interpret and follow their own agenda, interests and style of exploring led by natural disposition and curiosity to learn, experience, enjoy and reflect.**

Conceptual clarification

Forest School is not:

- outdoor learning (environmental space, outdoor space)
- urban school approach
- taking the inside outside

The research

This presentation discusses the results of a 6 week pilot project offering Forest School in London.

Practitioners' attitudes and expectation towards outdoor learning activities have been explored via joint reflections, shared learning experiences, reflective discussion regarding expectations

Challenges

- Time
- Space
- Resourcing
- Justifying time outside
- Permission
- Extra workload
- Accountability
- Be realistic!
- Who wants it – who is it for

Challenges

Teacher/s;

Loss of control

Fear of space

‘I’m not really outside person...I don’t know what to do’

Justifying time to do this is tricky, although I really can see the benefits

Relationships, noticing skills in chd not noticed before

Unexpected outcomes

- Having more fun with chd
- Enjoying listening to chd differently
- Listening to environment
- Using environment (environment is leading)
- Loved having time to look at area and space differently
- Realisation of what I do not know

Unexpected outcomes

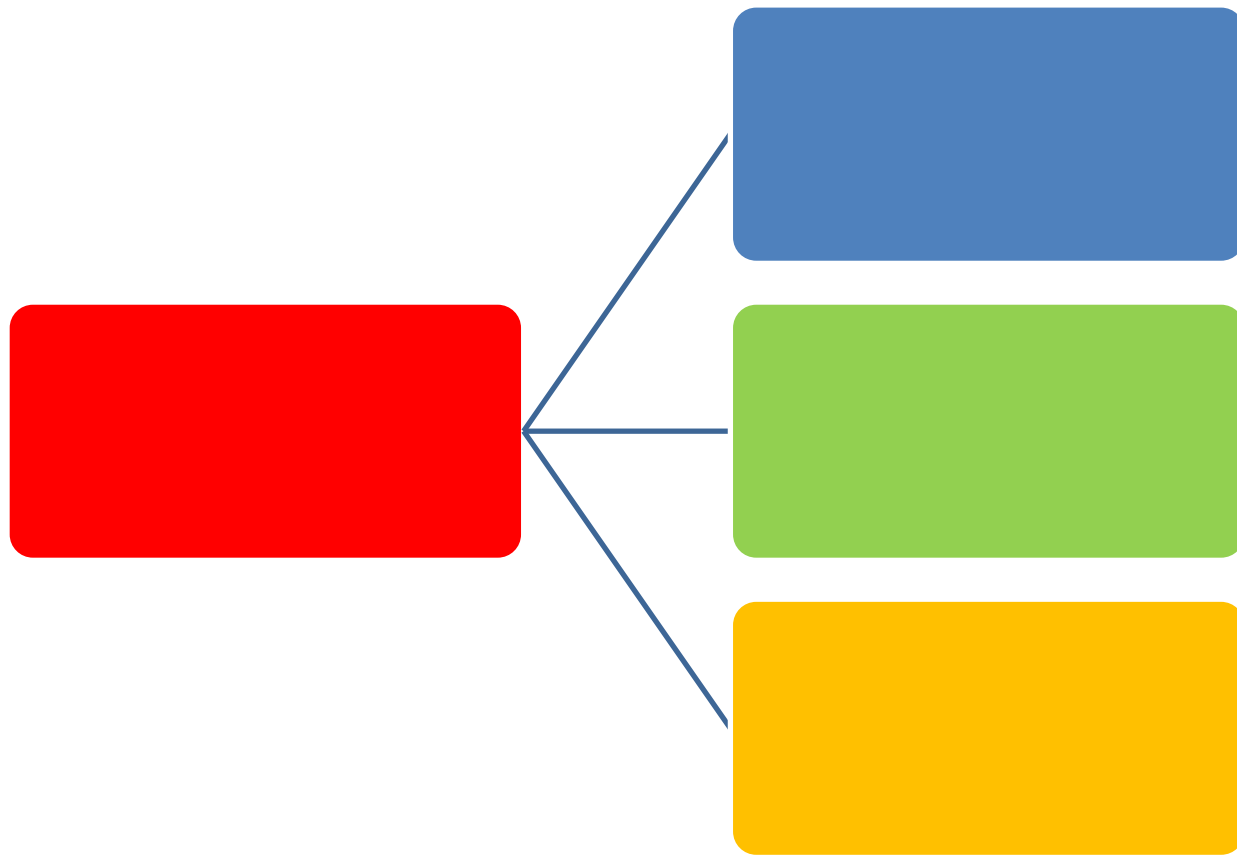
- Seeing chd differently – how they problem solved to find ‘Bill Badgers’ belongings
- More confident and able than I thought (I saw sides of chd not seen)
- How activities and learning outside stayed in our setting for a long time on the chd landscape – they looked forward to sessions and transitioned easily then I expected

Conclusion and ways forward

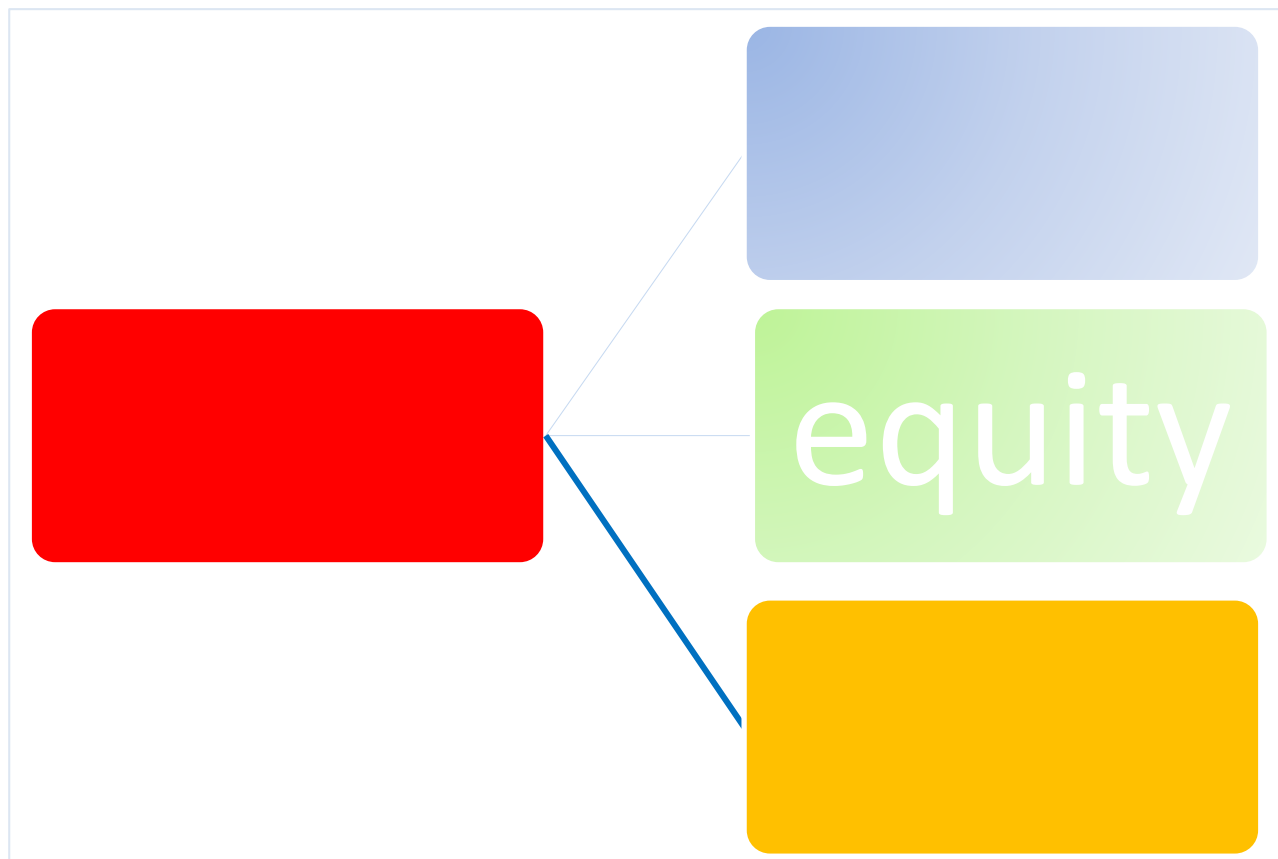
CPD – training- module delivery

- Interpretation and support in assessing risks, benefits and sustainability of using outdoor space is needed as it is underpinned by a positive attitude towards creative planning
- Xxx
- X
- X
- X
- X

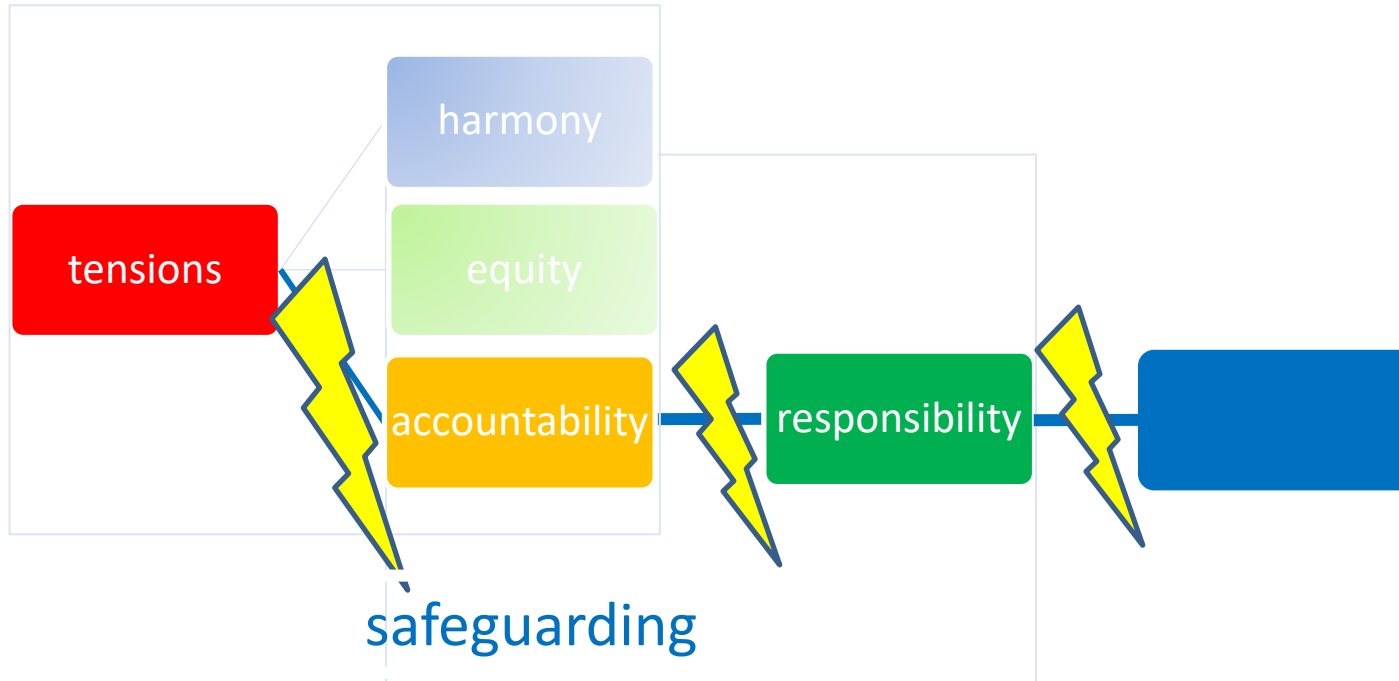




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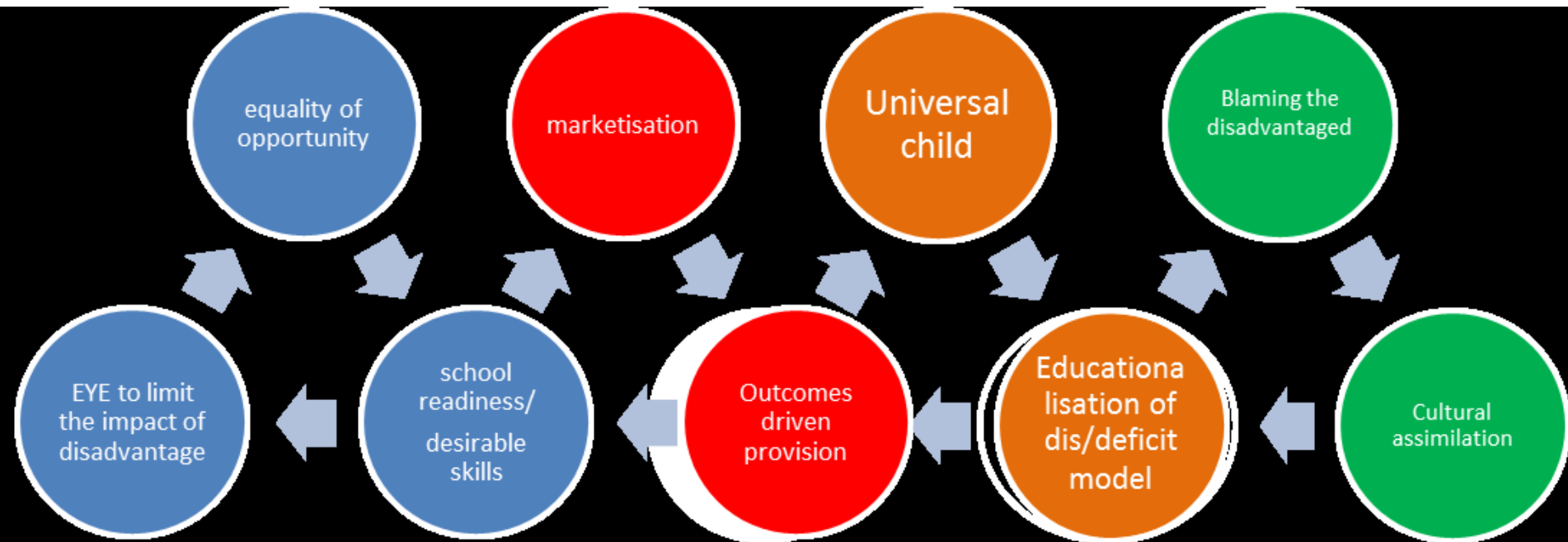


Interpretation :

 UNIVERSAL CHILD

The developmental approach has obvious consequences on pedagogical practices (standardized and ethnocentric practices)...

...more importantly for our argument is that the universal child is embedded in the deficit model



Thank you!

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