

THESIS

**Forest Trips as a Method of Adventure Education in Early
Childhood Setting**

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Bachelor's Degree in Adventure and Outdoor Education
(Community Educator, Bachelor of Humanities, 210 ECTS)

5/2021

ABSTRACT

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Title of thesis: Forest Trips as a Method of Adventure Education in Early Childhood Setting

Number of pages: 28 and 28 pages of appendices

Supervisor of the thesis: Tero Lämsä

Commissioned by: Pilke Daycare Centres, Pilke Laajalahti unit

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate how adventure education can be integrated into early childhood setting. More specifically its aim was to explore how forest trips can be utilized as a method of adventure education at Pilke Laajalahti, a private daycare centre in Espoo, who is the commissioner of this thesis. The thesis has been supplemented by an adventure educational activity guidebook, which includes examples of activities for forest trips in accordance with the annual pedagogical strategy plan of Pilke Laajalahti. The thesis is particularly timely, as the popularity of adventure education has grown in the recent years and the employees at Pilke Laajalahti had a need for a concrete approach towards the topic.

First, a theoretical framework was developed in order to understand how adventure education can be applied in early childhood setting. The theoretical framework was then complemented with qualitative research methods of observations and interviews with the children as well as community-based participatory development method of brainstorming with the commissioner. Based on this research a pilot forest trip was designed and utilized when compiling the adventure educational activity guidebook, which is the end product of this thesis.

It was discovered that there is room to integrate adventure education as a permanent part of the curriculum of Pilke Laajalahti and forest trips are one viable method of doing so. In the future, it would also be interesting to study what other methods of adventure and outdoor education could be applied at Pilke Laajalahti.

Keywords: adventure education, early childhood education, forest trips, daycare centres, pedagogic methods

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1 INTRODUCTION

Adventure and outdoor education has gained popularity in various forums including youth work, private sector and schools. There are various methods for adventure education and those should be selected in accordance with the skills and knowledge of the target group. Adventure education supports the development of an individual holistically and can be used with different types of groups ranging from people with special needs to elderly as well as professional athletes and young children. It is beneficial for developing both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills including, for example, group cohesion, self-efficacy and self-reflection (Karppinen, 2020a). These are useful also in early childhood education thus making adventure and outdoor education relevant for the target group of this thesis, too.

The objective of this thesis is to explore how adventure and outdoor education could be applied in early childhood setting. More specifically, it studies how forest trips can be used as a method of adventure and outdoor education at Pilke Laajalahti, a private daycare centre in Espoo. Pilke Laajalahti like many other daycare centres in Finland is located near a forest. These Finnish educational institutes are lucky since forests provide a unique and rich environment for pedagogic purposes. While Pilke Laajalahti was already conducting forest trips, the potential benefits of these trips had not been fully utilized. Therefore, this thesis studies how forest trips could be designed, structured and implemented more effectively at the daycare centre through adventure educational elements. In order to do this, a theoretical framework was developed through a literature review, qualitative research methods were used and the operations of Pilke Laajalahti were analyzed in practice.

This thesis was a result of me wanting to promote adventure and outdoor education in Finland and combine that with my personal experience of working in the field of early childhood education. Hereof, the thesis is complemented with an adventure educational activity guidebook for Pilke Laajalahti, so that the employees can refer back to it and find the necessary information easily. The guidebook explains the basics of adventure education, the role of instructors and provides concrete examples of activities that could be applied in future forest trips.

2 BACKGROUND AND GOALS OF THE THESIS

2.1 Pilke Daycare Centres

The title of this thesis is *'Forest Trips as a Method of Adventure Education in Early Childhood Setting'* and the commissioner is Pilke Daycare Centres, Pilke Laajalahti unit. Hereof, the topic of this paper is early childhood education and adventure education. More specifically, it explores how forest trips can be used to enhance Pilke Laajalahti's current pedagogic framework.

Pilke Daycare Centres is a Finnish daycare chain that currently operates 145 daycare centres across Finland (Pilke, 2021). The chain was founded in 2014, when two daycare chains were united (Pilke, 2021). According to their website, Pilke specializes in the provision of innovative early childhood education and care services by approximately 2000 early childhood education professionals (Pilke, 2021). The most important goal for them is "to provide the child a good day to learn – every day" and there are five different values guiding the everyday operations: safety, tolerance, positivity, participation and innovation (Pilke, 2021).

I have been working as a part-time substitute teacher at Pilke Laajalahti, a sports-focused daycare centre in Espoo, Finland since November 2017. I first started there as a trainee but was offered a position to continue working there alongside with my studies. During my time at Pilke Laajalahti I have developed a great interest towards early childhood education and wanted to explore this topic further also in my thesis. The employees at Pilke Laajalahti were very supportive of my plan to conduct my thesis research at the daycare centre. They also provided me with valuable input and ideas that enabled me to develop my initial thoughts about the research further.

Besides early childhood education, I have also been interested in understanding the possibilities of integrating adventure education deeper into the curriculum of Pilke Daycare Centres than what it currently is. Even though Pilke Laajalahti is a sports-focused daycare centre and they utilize various sports and outdoor activities, there appears to be a need for more thorough and structured thinking when it comes to adventure education (Mononen, 2020). Thus, I will attempt to bridge this gap in this thesis and study how forest trips and different activities could be used more effectively.

2.2 The Needs of the Commissioner and the Goals of the Thesis

In the early stages of the thesis process in December 2020, I was debating how I should narrow down the topic and what would the commissioner be interested in. With the help of my manager at Pilke Laajalahti as well as my thesis supervisor at Humak University of Applied Sciences we pinpointed the topic of this thesis into forest trips as a method of adventure education. This combined my interests and enabled me to utilize my experience from working in the field of early childhood education myself.

Additionally, based on the discussions with the commissioner, there appeared a need to enhance the use of forest trips in their educational curriculum through adventure education. This is because while they were already doing forest trips on regular basis these trips were lacking structure. The instructors did go through the plan for each trip in the weekly meeting, however often times there were no instructed activities for the children. Hereof, the pedagogic goals as well as the potential of the forest trips were quite limited. Pilke Laajalahti was interested to understand how their forest trips could be improved and how adventure education could become a greater part of their curriculum (Mononen, 2020).

Thus, the overall goal of this thesis is to integrate adventure educational methods and tools to early childhood educational setting with some concrete examples. Therefore, I chose to design a forest trip with specific activities for the children and document the findings. The goals were agreed upon with the manager of Pilke Laajalahti in order to ensure that they match with the objectives that the daycare centre itself has. In addition, the thesis utilized existing knowledge base of adventure and outdoor education in early childhood setting from academia and from practitioners in the field. The long-term aim of this thesis work is to enhance the operations of Pilke Daycare Centres, so that they can include structured adventure education in their pedagogic plan in the future.

Besides the forest trip, I also decided to create a guidebook in order to achieve the long-term aim of integrating adventure education in the curriculum of Pilke Laajalahti. The contents of the guidebook are based on the theoretical background of this thesis and the evaluation and feedback of the adventure educational pilot forest trip that was planned and implemented. The objective of the guidebook is to archive various activities that the educators at Pilke Daycare Centres can use to support adventure education in the future. The goal is to have the activities under different pedagogic themes easily accessible in one place. Additionally, the guidebook helps to plan and structure forest trips more effectively. Thus, the guidebook aims to provide a

concrete end product alongside with the more theoretical thesis for Pilke Daycare Centres that they can continue to use and build on in the future.

With this in mind, the thesis is planned to be practical and development focused project that can hopefully benefit the children and educators at Pilke Daycare Centres. It is supported by theory and recent research, though the main focus is on the actionable adventure education methods, mainly forest trips.

3 ADVENTURE EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING

3.1 The History of Adventure and Outdoor Education

Adventure education has existed for a long time, but its definition and methods used have changed through the years. The hunt-and-gather lifestyle of early settlers required all members of the tribe to possess certain survival skills. At that point in time adventure education could have taken form in hunting skills or craftsmanship that was passed on from generation to generation as described by Karppinen (2020).

As the societies developed, adventure skills were not a necessity for survival anymore, but the humankind's curiosity towards the world and exploration did not stop. Instead, there are endless examples of expeditions on land, in the Arctic, under the sea and on the mountains. These extreme conditions require extensive knowledge as well as equipment, which is why many of these activities are now considered as sports, for example, rock-climbing and diving. Over time adventure education started to become more institutionalized instead of being skills passed on informally.

According to Karppinen (2020) structural ideas of using outdoor adventure in education as a pedagogical method originated from the Central-European, British and American cultures. For example, the first adventure education school for navigation of the sea was established in 1419 in Cape St. Vincent (Cavén, 1995). Besides the navigation of the sea, rock climbing became as one of the first big methods of adventure education, leading to the establishment of the British Alpine School in 1857 (Cavén, 1995). At this point rock climbing was not necessarily done for the sake of survival but for leisure instead, which has also led to nature becoming a restorative place for humans. That is still the case today when more and more people have been given access and guidance on how to hike and enjoy the mountains or other forms of adventure and being outdoors.

One of the biggest organizations in the field of adventure and outdoor education today is Outward Bound that was founded in 1941 by Kurt Hahn and introduced in Finland in 1980s (Karppinen, 2020). The ideology behind Outward Bound was that adventure education is supposed to strengthen the individual both physically as well as mentally, including planning and organizational skills (Telemäki 1998 and Cavén, 1995). Still, the real adventure education

boom took place in the 1990s when it also became a field where schools, social work and youth work collaborated (Nieminen, 2020). Besides Outward Bound there are now many organizations, both in Finland as well as globally, focusing on adventure and outdoor education including various sports clubs and the scouts, so adventure education can take place through many forums.

3.2 The Pedagogic Goals of Adventure and Outdoor Education

There are various aspects that researchers connect with adventure and outdoor education. These include for example uncertain ending, voluntary participation (does not always get fulfilled) and an ability for the individual to choose what they perceive to be adventure for them (Cavén, 1995). Thereby, Keskinen (2015) concluded that each individual experiences adventure in their own way. Additionally, Keskinen (2015) outlined that there are various theoretical frameworks within adventure education that include social pedagogy, experiential learning, environmental education, and experiential pedagogy among others.

According to Beames and Brown (2016) adventure education is based on four key elements: authenticity, agency, uncertainty, and mastery. These four elements complement each other and together can help to improve the learners' self-efficacy and confidence. Authenticity refers to the ability to connect the learning with everyday life and place-based learning. This enables making connections to the past and future experiences of the learners, thus putting it into a wider context (Beames and Brown, 2016). Agency is closely linked to autonomy, which refers to "the ability to make an informed decision coupled with the taking of responsibility for this choice" (Beames, 2021). This can be fostered through a sense of accomplishment and increased intrinsic motivation. Uncertainty is associated with the uncertain elements in the process or the outcome of the activity. It promotes the application of problem-solving and encourages finding new solutions through experimenting, creativity and trial and error (Beames, 2021). Finally, mastery refers to extending learners' existing skills and knowledge and building those progressively over time.

In order to understand the pedagogic possibilities of adventure education I have adapted the definition of adventure education as cited by Koskinen (2020): "It is a holistic pedagogical and didactic method, which maintains motivation, positive learning outcomes and well-being in the school for both the teachers and students" (p. 33). This means that adventure education can be

utilized in various ways and can lead to various positive outcomes regarding the development and wellbeing of both of the children and their instructors. In order to ensure the wellbeing of all, proper instructing and leadership skills from the instructors are required. In addition, appropriate safety measures are essential in all adventure and outdoor education, as there is always some sort of risk involved (Harper and Robinson, 2005). It is also important that the activities and elements are designed in accordance with the target group's skill levels and abilities.

The key underlying and guiding pedagogical principle in adventure and outdoor education is experiential learning (Dewey 1963; Kolb 1984; Miettinen 2000; Karppinen 2007, Saaranen-Kauppinen, 2020). Karppinen (2020a) describes that adventure education has pedagogical and didactic acts that aim at the students "creating new relationships with the experiential content and place" (p. 96). Within this thesis the experiential content refers to the forest trip activities and elements, whereas the place refers to the forest itself. Both of these can act as methods that enable learning for the children.

Karppinen (2020a) divides the pedagogic outcomes of outdoor education into interpersonal and intrapersonal ones. Interpersonal development refers to social-pedagogical growth and interaction with others, in other words group outcomes. Contrastingly, intrapersonal development is connected with the individual's own self-constructions, self-awareness, and self-confidence (Karppinen, 2020a). The instructors play a crucial role in enabling both types of outcomes for the children. Adventure education can work as a method to almost anyone as it can promote mental or physical growth or improved image of oneself and their own capabilities (Sutinen, 2007). Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the development process might take some time and requires motivation of the learners, too (Sutinen, 2007).

3.3 Early Childhood Education and Pedagogic Goals

According to Finnish National Agency for Education (2021) "all children under school-age have a subjective right to early childhood education and care (ECEC)". Parents can choose from various early childhood education and care options including daycare centres, family daycare or different clubs or playground activities (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2021). Alternatively, the parents can take care of the children at home, which means that there is no requirement for the children to participate in ECEC, but the decision is up to their parents to

make. Despite this, it is the responsibility of the municipalities to arrange ECEC services for the children living there.

According to an annual report of early childhood education by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) approximately 250 000 children participated in early childhood education in 2019 (Säkkinen and Kuoppala, 2021). This constitutes approximately 77 per cent of the population aged 1-6 years in Finland, which shows a growth of 3 percentage points from the previous year (Säkkinen and Kuoppala, 2021). Besides the public daycare centres, there are also private centres, and the number of private ones has increased in the recent years. It was estimated that the number of private daycare centres had doubled from 500 in 2010 to approximately 1000 in 2017 (Järvenpää, 2017). Early childhood education in Finland has a set of national objectives and standards, which are applied in both public and private daycare centres nationally. In addition to these, each daycare centre also creates and follows its own annual pedagogical strategy plan (Varhaiskasvatuslaki, 2018). According to the Early Childhood Education Act, the private ECEC providers must create self-monitoring plan to ensure the appropriateness of early childhood education activities (Helsingin kaupunki, 2021). Hereof, the self-monitoring plan is also the primary method of controlling the quality and content of the private ECEC services, including Pilke Daycare Centres.

The main objectives of Pilke Daycare Centre Laajalahti are good quality interaction, participation, small group activity, flexible learning environments, everyday pedagogy, project work and pedagogic documentation (Pilke, 2021a). These main objectives together with the six areas of learning set a base for the content and activities in early childhood education at Pilke Laajalahti, and they are both clearly stated in their annual pedagogical strategy plan. These objectives aim to support the development of the children holistically. Pedagogic goals are set on an individual as well as on the group level (Pilke, 2021a), and these goals are determined by the Finnish early childhood education standards. Early childhood education pedagogic goals are set nationwide by the early childhood education law. These general goals set a base for all early childhood education in Finland (Varhaiskasvatuslaki, 2018).

3.4 Adventure and Outdoor Education in Early Childhood Educational Setting

The combination of adventure and outdoor education and early childhood education has been studied from different points of views through researchers and for example theses in Finland. Nieminen (2020) acknowledges that present-day adventure education employs multiple efforts and activities to support children's "independence, initiative, consideration and participation" (p. 40). He outlines that adventure education covers experiences of different kinds of outdoor, indoor, societal, and more recently also digital settings (Nieminen, 2020). Furthermore, Karppinen (2020) pinpoints that the learners, in this case the children, play an active role having initiative in the experience in experiential learning. He explains that "the experience is followed by reflection as a method for processing, understanding, and making a meaning of it" (Karppinen, 2020a, p. 97). This means that the learning process continues over a longer period of time after the experience such as a forest trip has been completed.

According to Karppinen (2020a) the Finnish outdoor culture and education in nature were mainly influenced by "the combination of Dewey's Learning by doing, Outdoor adventure education of the English speaking culture and Erlebnispädagogik of the German speaking culture, which became popular in the 1990's" (p. 103). Finland also benefits from its rich nature as well as Erä-tradition that is often referred to in adventure education too (Karppinen, 2020a). Especially in Finland much of adventure education is used in youth work and it is a common method in this field as described by Nieminen (2020). Besides youth work adventure education has also become a stronger part of early childhood education (Olenius, 2021). Olenius (2021) as a representative of Outward Bound Finland discussed how experience-focused pedagogy can be used in early childhood education. Additionally, he had also studied how adventure education looks in the everyday life of ECEC services and what kind of impact it may have on instructors' motivation and wellbeing.

It is important to understand that adventure and outdoor education can be used for various purposes as the methods are versatile. As Karppinen (2020a) acknowledges: "studying and learning by visual, auditory or kinesthetic ways in free space, fresh air and nature in the great Outdoors with a group of school mates offers interactive opportunities to use one's senses actively" (p. 103). Hereof, it is evident that the activities included in this thesis only cover a section of the possibilities that adventure education may offer in early childhood setting. Due to the time and research constraints, I have chosen to focus on forest trips as those are easy for

instructors to implement but they can still be modified according to the group size and needs, thus providing the necessary variability.

3.5 The Role of Instructors in Adventure and Outdoor Education

Instructors play a big role in adventure and outdoor education when it comes to the safety as well as the pedagogic goals. There are concrete actions that the instructors can take to enhance the learning of the participants. This may include, for example, clear guidance in the beginning of the activity but also the ability to react and adjust to changes when needed. As described by Beames (2021) instructors can help the learners in the mastery aspect of adventure education through providing feedback, support, and encouragement, as needed. They should assess that the activities provide a suitable challenge for the group, which is still in the reach of learners.

Also, the instructors should take into account the varying skill levels and try to encourage the participants in their development. This means that the instructors have to be flexible and play many roles in adventure and outdoor education. For example, during a forest trip the instructors should help the children to come up with play ideas, solve any potential conflicts and ensure participation of all children. In addition, and as a priority, the instructors have to ensure safe environment throughout the forest trip or any other method of adventure education. Therefore, the children have to be always overseen by at least one of the instructors. It is possible that not all children are equally excited and in these cases the instructors should aim to motivate the children to take part in the activities as this is beneficial for their learning process.

4 THE FOREST TRIP AS A METHOD IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Forests and outdoors offer a great learning environment for various purposes and different types of groups. It is worth noting, that besides a traditional classroom setting, some pedagogic goals can also be achieved in non-traditional surroundings such as urban settings, forests, and field trips. Some learners may even benefit from being outdoors and alternative methods such as experiential learning, as these support different ways of learning.

It is also stated that “Enough physical activity is important for child’s healthy growth, development, learning and wellbeing. Physical activity means different levels and ways of exercise such as playing indoors and outdoors, excursions and instructed sports classes” (Opetushallitus, 2018, p. 43-44). Thus, being outdoors can have many positive effects on the wellbeing of children both physically and mentally. Therefore, outdoor environments provide an excellent setting for different physical activities that may include informal play time or more instructed activities.

With this in mind, forest trips can be designed and carried out for multiple pedagogical purposes and ways. The aims can be, for example, specific pedagogic goals, adventure education, environmental education, a combination of those or just a forest trip. The structure of the forest trip together with the methods and activities used are strongly based on the objective of the trip. Therefore, the potential outcomes of the forest trip are also heavily based on the methods and activities. With this in mind, preset goals for outcomes and prior planning are crucial in the successful execution of the trip. This also helps to better reach the pedagogic goals associated with each forest trip as the process is documented and easier to follow through.

4.1 The Planning Process of the Forest Trip

Besides extending the knowledge base about the topic of this thesis through literature review and building the theoretical framework, the operations of Pilke Laajalahti were also studied in practice. In order to do this, I used qualitative research methods of interviews, observations and field notes as well as brainstorming. Jointly these enabled me to understand how forest trips could be better utilized in the pedagogic work of the daycare centre. They were also invaluable

in designing the activity guidebook. In the following section I will go through the various qualitative research methods and how those helped in the planning process of the forest trip.

Interviews

The initial plan was to conduct semi-structured interviews with six questions to two of the target groups' instructors at Pilke Laajalahti. The aim of these interviews was to find out the pedagogical goals of Pilke Laajalahti and their connection to forest trips currently. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 1. Unfortunately, these interview questions were left unanswered. Luckily enough, I was able to observe personally two of their forest trips in March 2021. Additionally, I had several informal discussions and brainstorming sessions with the instructors about their typical trips to forests and pedagogic themes. These different methods provided me a good knowledge base about the present situation.

Observations

In order to gain a thorough understanding of what happens currently during the forest trips, I observed two of these trips prior to the planning of my own pilot trip. These trips were also for the same target group (children 5-6 years old) as the one that I planned the activities for. The first trip took place on 23rd of March 2021 and the second one on 30th of March 2021.

During these trips I did not participate in the instructor's role. Instead, I followed the group closely and took notes throughout the trip. This way I was able to understand the current operations better as well as deepen my understanding of what works well and what could be improved. Besides making observations, I also managed to ask a couple of questions from the instructors of the group as well as some of the children during the trips. The overall findings from these observed forest trips can be found below.

The observed forest trips as well as forest trips at Pilke normally last approximately 1.5 hours. This includes the necessary time for the children to get ready and for the group to walk to the final destination and back. On the first observed trip there were 5 children in total meaning that the line-up as well as activities had to be adjusted for an uneven number. The two instructors kept the group well under control and there were no fights or other incidents (see Appendix 2).

Based on my observations what worked well was that all children were active and participated in the play throughout the trip. Yet, the entire 40 minutes that were spent at the destination were free playtime during which the instructors communicated with the children on case-by-case basis. Thus, it could enrich the trip to include some form of pre-determined activities but still reserve time for free play as all of the children mentioned that this was something that they liked in the interviews (see Appendix 2).

The second observed forest trip was similar to the first one and the destination was the same as well. However, this time there were 10 children participating, which was double the amount from the first trip and of course required additional control and adjustments from the instructors. The route and walking in pairs happened in the same manner and there were no issues either time. Yet, due to the bigger group size it was evident that some of the children struggled to maintain focus and were more distracted especially on the way to the final destination (see Appendix 3).

At the destination the children came up with an idea to build a bridge over a shallow ditch all together. All of the children participated in this activity and they even started dividing tasks among themselves. The instructors participated in a small role when asking for example what materials the children are planning on using and how they are planning to complete the building process, but majority of the play happened independently (see Appendix 3). Therefore, again there were no structured activities for the children, but they were visibly happy with the free play time at the forest. The bridge activity seemed to develop the children's problem-solving skills, co-operation skills, social skills and creativity, which are all positive attributes. Thus, similar kind of activities could be utilized in future trips as well as in the activity guidebook along with other suitable activities.

In addition to these field observations, I went and observed few different options for forest trip destinations and chose which one would be suitable for my pilot day. I took into consideration the distance from the daycare centre, the area and ensured that the area is safe. I also checked the routes that we could use and envisioned where and how each activity would take place so the logistics would run smoothly during the forest trip.

When I designed the forest trip and the guidebook, I used the information above alongside with the theoretical knowledge base to ensure that they are suitable for the target group and the circumstances.

Preparations

The planning process of the forest trip included many stages. I started the preparations by discussing with the manager of Pilke Laajalahti and the target group's instructors about my plans for the upcoming forest trip. We started to plan the schedule and agreed that I would inform the families of the children about this project and ask for a permission to take pictures from the trip.

Also, I started to plan the activities for this pilot forest trip. I began the process of designing the activities by studying Pilke Laajalahti's current pedagogic theme, which was game-based pedagogy for the months of March and April (Mononen, 2020), as well as their six areas of learning objectives. It was evident that I wanted to create activities for this day that meet these goals as well as include adventurous elements. Hereof, the goals for this forest trip included both interpersonal as well as intrapersonal goals. These are listed in the forest trip plan (see Appendix 4) and split under three specifying themes (motoric, cognitive and socio-emotional). These goals include, for example, teamwork skills, experiences of excitement and success, courage to try and learn new things, and coordination skills. Besides the activities themselves, I also tried to consider ways to make the forest trip feel more nature-focused and adventurous for the children. Yet, still recognizing that the perception of adventure is always subjective as outlined by Sutinen (2007). For example, instead of taking the usual pedestrian road to the destination I thought about allowing the children to walk off-path and letting them lead the way for a certain period.

The structure and the schedule for my forest trip were based on the earlier observations. The observations also helped me in practice when designing the logistics and activities for the pilot forest trip. I started to think about how many activities could be included and what type of activities would be suitable for this group also taking into account the current season. Additionally, it was essential to keep in mind the pedagogic goals and themes as well as the annual sports activity plan when designing the forest trip.

The annual sports activity plan (for age 3-6) at Pilke Laajalahti:

April-May 2021: Physical exercise in nature and sports according to children's wishes

Motoric goals:

- balance and movement skills
- rehearsing skills developed during the annual semester

Cognitive goals:

- exploring the nature and its environment together as a group
- moving in the forest, the positive experiences, and outcomes of nature
- sports according to children's wishes, interests, and skills. Planning together with the children according to their age level.
- biking

Social and emotional goals:

- excitement and experiences of success, joy of movement together with friends

(Pilke, 2021b)

Above are all the goals listed, and my aim was to include some of these pedagogic elements into my forest trip and the activities. Besides the forest trip itself, I considered that it would be beneficial to complement it with a reflection session to extend the children's learning time, which is in accordance with the suggestion of Karppinen (2020a). I thought about the best ways to implement a reflection without interfering with other daily activities. Normally when the children return to the daycare centre they gather around in a circle before the lunch. I figured that this would be a good place for some reflection, though it should be designed in such way that is fun and suitable for this age group. This would also be a good time for me and other instructors to gather some information from the children, for example, how they liked the forest trip, did they learn something new and what was the most interesting thing for them, so that the future trips could be tailored according to their needs and wishes.

Reflection and feedback

I decided to organize a reflection session for the children during the snack break at the pilot forest trip as well as a feedback session back at the daycare centre after the trip. These setups enabled possibilities for free discussions and active participation. My task as an instructor was to support the children and to moderate the discussions in a way that creates a socially safe environment for the children to share their thoughts and experiences.

As a part of the reflection, I formulated a couple of open-ended questions to encourage the thinking process of the children and to help them evaluate their learnings and experiences. In addition, I also designed a simple questionnaire with three questions and smiley face answers, to suit the target group's age and development level (See Appendix 6). This feedback will suggest what the children possibly liked and did not like, as well as provide input for developing the forest trips and different structured activities in the future.

4.2 Executing the Forest Trip

The forest trip started at the daycare centre through initial preparations and getting all the children ready for the trip. Before leaving the daycare centre, I went through the forest trip plan and schedule with the other two instructors. We split the responsibilities and gathered all the group gear based on the forest trip plan (see Appendix 4). Besides the group gear, we also checked with the children that they all had snacks in their backpacks. In addition to this, we ensured that the children were dressed properly for the trip and had gone to the bathroom before leaving.

After everybody was ready and outside, I instructed the children to line up in pairs. One instructor walked in front to lead the group, one walked in the middle and the third instructor walked last in line, making sure that no one gets left behind. The ability to choose pairs independently aimed to enhance the social safety as well as social skills of the children, as the pairs will be changed by the instructors if the pair is not behaving or walking properly. However, if there would have been difficulties in forming pairs, the instructors would have helped by making adjustments as necessary. The primary task during the walk from the instructors' perspective was to keep all the group members in sight and safe. However, the walk can also be used for pedagogic purposes, for example, to spot signs of spring or other nature related teaching topics. With the aim of maintaining children's interest and exploring different

places in the forest, I chose to take different routes on the way to the destination and back. For example, we walked through smaller paths and crossed a small bridge before reaching the destination. Also, on the way we stopped when we saw or heard something interesting in the nature such as biking trails, birds, flowers, or other signs of spring that the children recognized based on their previous experiences. We talked about these observations together with the group and as instructors we tried to connect the findings to their existing knowledge in accordance with the element of authenticity of adventure education.

Once we reached the destination, which can be seen in Appendix 8, we gathered our backpacks into one spot and then asked the children to come closer to listen to the instructions. I started to instruct them about the trip's program, activities, and safety measures. Then, I split the group into two smaller groups, assigned an instructor for each group and explained the activities to the children more precisely. I had designed two activities: Adventure route and Dice game, that are explained thoroughly in the guidance for the activities document that can be seen in the Appendix 5. These activities had different goals. For example, on an interpersonal level, the Adventure route aimed to enhance the teamwork skills and group cohesion. These elements are particularly important in adventure and outdoor education. On intrapersonal level this activity aimed to develop children's physical movement, belief in oneself and courage to tackle different obstacles.

The Adventure route required both individual and group effort in order to succeed. Since each of the participants were attached to a rope, they could only move as fast as the group's last person. The children also helped one another on various obstacles, for example, when climbing over a rock in the beginning of the route. The instructor's role in this activity was to encourage and guide the children on each obstacle, as well as to maintain safety during the activity.

The Dice game included six different tasks for the children to complete. These tasks included physical activities as well as nature elements, where children got to use their senses and creativity. On interpersonal level, this activity aimed to increase the social competence of the children by encouraging them to support and cheer for their peers as well as patience by waiting for one's own turn. More importantly, the children connected with the nature together with their small group for example through running and touching different trees and collecting different items from the forest during the tasks.

I had decided to give 10 minutes for the small groups to complete these activities, and then it was time to switch. After the groups had finished both activities, we united for a snack break

during which we also reflected on the trip thus far. Following the snack break, we collected all the trash into trash bags and the children packed their bags. Then, there was free play time as based on the previous observations this was greatly appreciated by the children who enjoyed exploring and playing in the forest freely. Free play time encourages the children to play creatively, and it also offers a good opportunity for the children to bond with group members and have fun. Having fun was also one of the connecting key elements in the instructed activities. This is an important factor, given the age of the target group, who are only at the early stages of their adventure and outdoor education and learning path in general. As instructors, we were there to provide support and solve any potential conflicts if needed, and to ensure that all children are included in the play. Even though, the children were allowed to roam around the area freely, they were always overseen by at least one of us instructors to ensure that they were safe.

After the free play time we collected all of our gear, lined up in pairs again and headed back to the daycare centre, taking a different path this time. At the daycare centre we unpacked our gear and returned to the classroom, where we had a wrap up discussion with the whole group and the children completed a short feedback survey (see Appendix 6).

4.3 Evaluation of the Forest Trip

The forest trip was successful on many aspects. Firstly, we managed to follow the activity plan and stayed on schedule. Prior to the forest trip, children were excited for the upcoming trip and asking when it would take place. This excitement was also visible during the forest trip, as the children participated well and were active throughout. They also liked both of the instructed activities, though the Adventure route was a clear favourite preferred by 11/12 children.

Based on the feedback survey to the children, the perception of the forest trip was positive overall. The highest average was to the question of whether the children had fun on the trip (2.5/3.0). They also expressed that they would like to go on another similar trip in the future (2.4/3.0). The lowest score of the three questions was to whether the children had learned something new during the trip (1.9/3.0), however this was still a relatively good score as it equals the regular smiley face in the feedback form (see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7).

In particular, many of the children liked the last obstacle of the Adventure route, where they had to balance a bean bag over their head while being connected to their group members through

a rope and moving towards the finish line. For example, one child said that this was their favourite thing about the whole forest trip, because it was challenging but also a rewarding experience.

On the other hand, the Dice game could have included more teamwork tasks to enhance the group cohesion and this way apply adventure and outdoor pedagogy. Thus, this could be altered in the future. However, this activity suited well with Pilke Laajalahti's current pedagogic theme; game-based pedagogy (Mononen, 2020). The game itself is very versatile and adjustable, as the tasks can be designed to meet different pedagogic purposes and the difficulty level of the tasks can be easily adjusted, too.

I found the division into two smaller groups to be helpful, as some of the children may struggle to focus in a big group setting. The small groups were well-functioning, and additionally this set up enabled the instructors to be more personal and effective when instructing. The division of activities also provided an opportunity to achieve more learning goals and have the two activities concentrate on different aspects that complement one another.

4.4 Creating the Guidebook

As the end product of my thesis, I created an adventure educational activity guidebook (see Appendix 9), which is based on the six different areas of learning of Pilke Laajalahti. Hereof, the activities are neatly organized under these themes and easy to find and choose from. The idea of the guidebook is to integrate adventure education into concrete examples of activities for Pilke Laajalahti to use during future forest trips. This way it is possible for the instructors to keep the forest trips versatile, interesting, and valuable from the pedagogic perspective. Besides the activities I also tried to condense the basics of adventure education and its applicability in early childhood education to the beginning of the guidebook to ensure that the readers will have the necessary knowledge about this topic. The role of the instructor is particularly important chapter as that gives guidelines to the readers on the things to keep in mind when instructing forest trips.

The purpose of the guidebook is to hopefully help the instructors of Pilke Laajalahti to apply, structure and implement forest trips as part of their pedagogic framework more easily, and to promote adventure and outdoor education as a whole. The guidebook was requested by the commissioner as they perceived it to be a way to continue designing better structured forest

trips and implement adventure education in their curriculum more easily. The activities listed in the guidebook are examples, however there are plenty of other potential activities to complement or build on the current ones.

When creating the guidebook, it was evident that it needed to be as concise as possible in order to be practical and easy for the instructors to use in their everyday work. This limited the length, which meant that the theory part in the beginning as well as the activities had to be written succinctly. Besides these main elements I also wanted to include pictures from the pilot forest trip. These help to showcase adventure education in practice as well as highlight important elements such as safety features and cleaning up after a snack break. These pictures were taken by the author and the permission for the photos had been asked from the parents.

While the thesis and the guidebook are written in English the commissioner also asked for the guidebook in Finnish. In order to comply with their wishes and to ensure that all of the instructors are able to utilize the guidebook I also translated it. The guidebook is in a digital format as all the instructors have work phones or tablets that they use during the day. This format is also more environmentally friendly, so it was an easy choice to make. However, it can also be printed out in a physical format if wished so.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The thesis writing process as a whole was a time-consuming though rewarding project. Especially in the beginning narrowing down the topic was challenging. Also, I had to find a balance between theoretical and practical knowledge in order to provide results that would be useful in the everyday life of Pilke Laajalahti. After writing the thesis and focusing on the theoretical parts of it, designing the guidebook felt like an easier task as it was strongly linked to the existing knowledge that I had gained through the thesis process. It was great that I got support from the commissioning daycare centre, yet it was evident that they were busy with their daily work and therefore communication was slow at times. It was useful that the daycare centre and its instructors and children were familiar to me through my experience of working there. This enabled me to build the necessary trust and authority quicker, which made the instructing during the forest trip a little bit easier.

Based on the positive experience and feedback from the completed forest trip, it was evident that many of the elements could be used in the future and included in the activity guidebook as well. On prior trips that I observed there were no instructed activities, however, based on the pilot forest trip it appeared to be a good structure to reserve time for the free play but also complement that with one or a few instructed activities based on adventure and outdoor pedagogy. This way the children were able to maintain their focus during the activities and develop both intra- and interpersonal skills through them.

The pilot forest trip can be viewed positively as it succeeded in the application of adventure educational methods to the target group. The two instructors that helped me during the pilot forest trip thought it was successful and were open to the idea of continuing to apply adventure education methods in the form of forest trips in the future. Also, while there were more instructed activities than during my observations the children reacted well. It was great to see how enthusiastic they were before, during and after the forest trip. The children were receptive towards the new structured model of the forest trip and the two adventure educational activities that I had designed. They gave positive feedback through the feedback survey as well as informally through discussions during the reflection session.

When thinking of how this thesis could be developed further there are various things that I would like to study more of. Firstly, the Adventure route was the clear favourite activity for the children, so it would be interesting to know if the children would have perceived the trip equally positively if there would have been only the Dice game or some other activity instead. Additionally, it would be insightful to widen the same topic and research how forest trips could be applied for different age groups or what other methods of adventure and outdoor education could be utilized in early childhood setting.

5.2 Conclusion

The main objective of my thesis was to explore adventure educational methods in early childhood in the form of forest trips specifically. The thesis focused on me designing and implementing a pilot forest trip for my target group as well as creating an adventure educational activity guidebook for Pilke Daycare Centres. Simultaneously, I aimed to promote adventure and outdoor education as a whole in early childhood setting.

Based on my study and the results of the pilot day, forest trips can be seen as a viable method of adventure education in this setting. It is relatively easy to incorporate various activities for different pedagogic goals and therefore adjust the trips as needed. The response from the children as well as the instructors was favorable, and this supported my observations and experiences as the researcher of this thesis.

The thesis process has increased my understanding of academic research and developed my knowledge about adventure education and its applicability. It was a journey with ups and downs, but in the end, I am proud of the final result. I hope that this study will encourage Pilke Laajalahti to incorporate adventure education to their operations. Most importantly, I hope that the children will benefit from this study and are able to enjoy well-implemented forest trips in the future. In this line, one of the most rewarding moments during the entire thesis process was when one of the children spontaneously ran up to me at the daycare centre thanking me for the great forest trip experience and wishing that it would happen again soon. For me this feedback shows that this study has been valuable.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Interview questions

Interview questions / Haastattelukysymykset:

1. Why are forest trips made? / Miksi metsäretkiä tehdään?
2. What growth and development objectives of the children do forest trips support and how? / Mitä lasten kasvu- ja kehityskohtia metsäretket tukevat ja kehittävät, ja miten?
3. When going on a forest trip with the children, which aspects are considered and fulfilled with regards both to the general goals of early childhood education in Finland and Pilke Daycare Centres own set of goals? In which way and why? / Kun lähdetään lasten kanssa retkelle, niin mitä lapsen kehityksen yleisiä varhaiskasvatuksen tavoitteita ja Pilke päiväkodin itse määrittelemiä tavoitteita toteutuu? Miten ja miksi?
4. Is there a repetitive structure in the execution of the forest trips or are they individually designed? / Toteutetaanko tiettyä ohjelmarunkoa metsäretkillä vai onko jokainen metsäretki yksilöllisesti suunniteltu toteutus?
5. What safety measures are taken into account at forest trips? / Mitä turvallisuusasioita otetaan huomioon metsäretkillä?
6. Anything else you would like to comment or add? / Tuleeko mieleen jotain muuta kommentoitavaa tai lisättävää?

Appendix 2 – 1st Forest trip observations

FOREST TRIP OBSERVATIONS 23.3.

Number of children: 5

Duration: Approximately 1.5 hours

Start time: 9:40

End time: 11:10 back at the daycare centre

Notes:

First all of the children were instructed to go to the bathroom and get dressed.

Scheduling:

How long do preparations (bathroom + getting dressed) last?

- 10-15min

How long does the walking take?

- ~15min one way on this trip

How much time is spent at the destination?

- Approx. 40min

How long is the entire trip?

- Approx. 1.5h

Ways of doing:

What is the method of transportation?

- By foot walking in pairs

How are the pairs formed?

- Children make the pairs by themselves and line up independently. In case there is uneven number of children one of them can walk together with an instructor.

How does this work?

- Works well. The line stayed in the formation and the entire group walked on the right side of the street. In case of other pedestrians, cars or other moving vehicles the instructors had to be careful to ensure that the children watch out.

What happens at the destination?

- Free playtime during which the instructors communicated with the children a couple of times i.e. ask what they are doing, why and how. It was visible that all children were active and participated in the play voluntarily. They played all together as well as in two smaller groups. Play included imaginative scenarios.

How are the children instructed?

- The instructors give verbal guidance on the area where the children are allowed to be/play in. Similarly the children are told where they should not go to. Additionally, instructions are given when it is almost time to go (5-10mins prior) and then when the group heads back to the daycare centre. Otherwise the children could play freely on their own and explore without pre-determined activities.

What kind of instructing styles are used?

- In the beginning the instructors give instructions to the entire group more in the form of commands and what the children should/should not do. During the play the instructors give guidance and communicate with the children more on an individual level.

How do the children react?

- It was clear that the children enjoyed being outdoors and playing in the nature. They had many creative ideas for play in the beginning and did not necessarily need additional encouragement.

What activities are conducted for the children?

- No planned activities during this trip. Instead, the children could play and explore the nature as they wished.

Informal interviews for the children (3 children):

Did you enjoy the forest trip?

- “Yes”. *Nodding*. “Pretty nice”.

What was the best part?

- “Playing fishing with friends”. “Beginning of the fishing game was the best”. “Kicking the water”.

Overall conclusions:

What worked well?

- The play of the children as they were proactive and played well as a group. They liked exploring the nature including spotting different signs of spring. All children were active and this time there were no fights or any other incidents.

What did not work so well?

- The children enjoyed the free playtime, but this means that there were no discoveries through guided activities or new pedagogic learning experiences during the forest trip.

What could be improved?

- Guided activities could be integrated as part of the forest trip to make a better use of pedagogic goals and methods.

Appendix 3 – 2nd Forest trip observations

FOREST TRIP OBSERVATIONS 30.3.

Number of instructors: 2 + myself

Number of children: 10

Duration: Approximately 1.5 hours

Start time: 9:45 started the preparation bathroom + getting dressed, 10:05 actual departure

End time: 11:25 back at the daycare centre

Notes:

We used the same equipment i.e. safety vests as last time.

Scheduling:

How long do preparations (bathroom + getting dressed)?

- 15-20min

How long does the walking take?

- ~15min one way on this trip

How much time is spent at the destination?

- Approx. 40min

How long is the entire trip?

- Approx. 1.5h

Ways of doing:

What is the method of transportation?

- By foot walking in pairs, we took the same route as last time

How are the pairs formed?

- Children make the pairs by themselves and line up independently.

How does this work?

- Works well, the children were able to form the pairs without any arguments and did not require help from the instructors.

What happens at the destination?

- The time spent at the destination is free playtime for the children and they decided to build a bridge over the ditch. This idea came after all the children had been playing together and one suggested it out loud and all the other children joined.

How are the children instructed?

- Again, the instructors give verbal guidance on the area where the children are allowed to play in the beginning. The instructors try to urge the children to explore and comprehend new things. In case there is a need they will also provide individual guidance if someone has not listened or is misbehaving.

How do the children react?

- Children were excited to go to the forest. Also, already on the trip one of the children had mentioned that building a bridge is the best so it seems like this activity/play has happened on previous forest trips too.

What activities are conducted for the children?

- While there were no formal activities planned, the children themselves decided to build a bridge and all of them took part in this.

Informal interviews for the children (3 children):

Did you enjoy the forest trip?

- “Yes. It’s nice to be outside”. “Yes”. “Yes it was nice”.

What was the best part?

- “When you find sticks from the ground and can build with them”. “That we explored a drainage pipe and got to see each other through it”. “Building a bridge and playing with friends”.

Overall conclusions:

What worked well?

- The children managed to come up with goal-oriented game of building a bridge by themselves. All of the 10 children participated and were able to divide different tasks for each other independently. Though the instructors enabled this with some guidance and questions related to the playtime. The playtime enhanced the group’s cohesion and there were no arguments during the play.

What did not work so well?

- The play area could be better defined to avoid repeating instructions to the children going too far out.

What could be improved?

- More interaction as an addition to the free playtime could serve the children and their experience even better.

Appendix 4 – Forest trip plan 22nd April 2021 (in Finnish)

METSÄRETKISUUNNITELMA

To 22.4.2021, kirjannut: Linnea Hakanpää

Ryhmä: Tikat (5–6-vuotiaat)

Teema: pelimaailma ja seikkailukasvatus

TAVOITTEET

- motoriset:
 - tasapainotaidot
 - heittotarkkuus
 - liikkumisen nopeus
 - koordinaatiokyky
 - apuvälineiden käyttö liikuntasuoritusten yhteydessä

- kognitiiviset:
 - ohjeiden seuraamiseen keskittymistä ja ohjeiden mukaan toimimista
 - kokemuksia oman kehon hallinnasta aktiviteettien yhteydessä vaihtelevassa metsämaastossa
 - oppimista ja kokemista aistien avulla

- sosioemotionaaliset:
 - ryhmätyöskentelytaitoja
 - jännitystä ja onnistumisen kokemuksia
 - uskallusta kokeilla ja opetella, vaikka tekeminen olisi uutta
 - luonnossa liikkumisen riemua yhdessä kavereiden kanssa
 - oman vuoron odottamista
 - omien tunteiden sanoittamisen opettelemista: mistä minä tykkäsin, mistä minä en tykännyt, miltä minusta tuntui

Tarvikkeet ja valmistautuminen:

- ryhmän tarvikkeet: ryhmäpuhelin, i-pad (hiirijastin), nimilista, ensiapulaukku, metsäretkisuunnitelma, aktiviteettien ohjeistukset, paperia, kyniä, varaeväät, käsidesi, talouspaperia/nenäliinoja, turvaliivit
- aktiviteettien tarvikkeet: noppa, hulavanne x4, ryömintätunneli, riisityyny x2, ”tikapuut”, ämpäri (+luonnosta kävyt)
- lasten tarvikkeet: omat eväät (reput), säänmukainen retkivaatetus

Metsäretken kulku:

1. Näin aloitamme metsäretken: Kokoonnumme ensiksi päiväkodilla. Ohjaajat ja lapset valmistautuvat lähtöön ja pakkaavat kaikki tarvittavat tarvikkeet mukaan. Päiväkodin pihalla muodostetaan parijono ja aloitetaan matka kohti metsäretkikohdetta (matkan kesto n. 10min/suunta).

Perillä aloitetaan ohjatuilla aktiviteeteilla, jonka jälkeen on eväshetki ja lopuksi vapaata leikkiä, ennen kuin palataan takaisin päiväkodille.

2. Ohjatut aktiviteetit:

Ryhmä jaetaan kohteessa 2 pienryhmään, ja pienryhmillä on omat ohjaajat. Aktiviteetteja suoritetaan vuoron perään samanaikaisesti näissä pienryhmissä.

a) **Noppapeli:** Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset heittävät vuoron perään noppaa, ja suorittavat nopan luvun mukaisesti eri tehtäviä:

- 1 = seiso yhdellä jalalla silmät kiinni ja laske viiteen
- 2 = etsi ja tuo metsästä 4 isoa käpyä
- 3 = hyppää 5 kyykkyhyppyä
- 4 = juokse ja kosketa kolmea puuta, ja palaa takaisin
- 5 = pyöritä hulavannetta 2 kertaa vartalon ympäri
- 6 = etsi ja tuo 2 kiinnostavaa luonnonesineitä

Ohjaaja pitää kirjaa suorituksista, ja voittaja on se, joka ensimmäisenä on kokeillut kaikkia tehtäviä.

Leikin kesto 10min: hiirijastin.

b) **Seikkailurata:** Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset suorittavat seikkailuradan, joka sisältää erilaisia liikunnallisia ja seikkailullisia osioita. Seikkailuradalla on selkeä alku ja loppu, ja se koostuu sekä luonnonmateriaaleista että päiväkodin leikkivälineistä.

- 1 = ryömintätunneli
- 2 = kiven ylitys
- 3 = tikapuuaskellus
- 4 = hulavanneloikka
- 5 = käpyjen heitto ämpäriin
- 6 = riisityynyn kuljetus päälle maaliin

Leikin kesto 10min: hiirijastin.

3. Eväshetki (ja reflektointi):

Lapset syövät omia eväitään ja samalla keskustellaan retkikokemuksesta, mahdollisuus avoimeen palautteeseen (kesto n. 10min)

4. Lasten toiveleikki:

Vapaata leikkiä (kesto n. 10min)

5. Näin lopetamme metsäretken:

Vapaan leikin jälkeen keräämme ryhmän kasaan ja tavarat mukaan, ja suuntaamme takaisin päiväkodille.

6. Palautteen keruu päiväkodilla:

Lapsille annetaan palautelomakkeet, joihin he vastaavat värittäen hymynaamoja.

Appendix 5 – Guidance for the activities (in Finnish)

AKTIVITEETTIEN OHJEISTUKSET

a) **Noppapeli:** Lapset heittävät vuoron perään noppaa, ja suorittavat nopan luvun mukaisesti eri tehtäviä. Ohjaaja pitää kirjaa suorituksista, ja voittaja on se, joka ensimmäisenä on kokeillut kaikkia tehtäviä.

Leikin kesto 10min: hiirijastin.

1 = SEISO YHDELLÄ JALALLA SILMÄT KIINNI JA LASKE VIITEEN

2 = ETSI JA TUO 4 ISOA KÄPYÄ

3 = HYPPÄÄ 5 KYKKYHYPPYÄ

4 = JUOKSE JA KOSKETA KOLMEA ERI PUUTA, JA PALAA TAKAISIN

5 = PYÖRITÄ HULAVANNETTA 2 KERTAA VARTALON YMPÄRI

6 = ETSI JA TUO 2 KIINNOSTAVAA LUONNONESINETTÄ

b) **Seikkailurata:** Lapset suorittavat seikkailuradan, joka sisältää erilaisia liikunnallisia ja seikkailullisia osioita. Rata alkaa maaliviivalta ja päättyy majaan (joka on maali). Kun edellinen lapsi pääsee maaliin, ohjaaja lähettää seuraavan liikkeelle.

Leikin kesto 10min: hiirijastin.

1 = RYÖMINTÄTUNNELI (RYÖMITÄÄN TUNNELIN LÄPI)

2 = KIVEN YLITYS (KIIVETÄÄN KIVEN YLI)

3 = TIKAPUUASKELLUS (ASTUTAAN MOLEMMILLA JALOILLA JOKAISEEN REIKÄÄN, TYYLI MUUTEN VAPAA)

4 = HULAVANNELOIKKA (EDETÄÄN LOIKKIMALLA HULAVANTEESTA TOISEEN)

5 = KÄPYJEN HEITTO ÄMPÄRIIN (HEITETÄÄN VIIVALTA 5 KÄPYÄ ÄMPÄRIIN. JOS EPÄONNISTUU, NIIN PALATAAN VIIVALLE JA HEITETÄÄN UUDESTAAN.)

6 = RIISITYYNYN KULJETUS PÄÄN PÄÄLLÄ MAALIIN (ASETETAAN RIISITYYNY PÄÄN PÄÄLLE, JA EDETÄÄN MAHDOLLISIMMAN NOPEASTI KOHTIA MAALIA (MAJAA). MIKÄLI RIISITYYNY TIPPUU, ASETETAAN SE TAKAISIN PÄÄN PÄÄLLE JA JATKETAAN PUDOTUSKOHDASTA.)

Appendix 6 – Feedback form for the children (in Finnish)

1. OLIKO METSÄRETKELLÄ KIVAA?



2. OPITKO JOTAIN UUTTA?



3. HALUAISITKO UUELLEEN TÄLLAISELLE METSÄRETKELLE?



Appendix 7 – Run through of the forest trip

The number of instructors: 2 instructors and myself

The number of children: 12

The preparations went well. The children were quick and independent in getting ready, they all had proper clothing, and all had their backpacks and snacks packed for this forest trip. We instructors packed all the group gear and the necessary equipment for the activities.

The children were excited to go to the forest trip, and some were asking me in advance that is it today that I am instructing their forest trip. This shows that the children had been informed in advance and that they were waiting for this trip.

Approximate timetable of the trip:

Preparations: 9.15

Leaving the daycare centre: 9.30

Arrival at the destination place and starting the instructed activities: 9.45

Snack time: 10.15

Free play time (all children together; building a hut in the forest): 10.30

Preparations to leave the forest and head back to the daycare centre: 10.50

Leaving back to the daycare centre: 10.55

Arrival back at the daycare centre: 11.10

The timetable was good and suitable for the structure I designed for this forest trip.

Instructions at the destination took a bit more time than I had originally planned, but there was room for some delay, so it did not affect much.

Results of the forest trip:

The children were participating and playing well together, except at the end there were few children who had some spats and also difficulties to follow the instructions.

Both of the groups completed the adventure route before the mouse got to the cheese (mouse timer). They co-operated together when accomplishing the adventure route and its obstacles/tasks. All of the children participated in both of the activities. Focusing was a bit difficult at times, but overall the activities succeeded and children enjoyed doing them.

During the snack break children chatted with each other (=bonding time) and we discussed about the forest trip and the activities as a group. I also asked verbally some open-ended questions during discussions with the children in order to understand their thoughts, opinions and experiences more thoroughly. Some of the answers are listed below.

What was the best part of the forest trip?

"Balancing with bean bags was the coolest part"

"Bean bags were the best"

"Running and jumping"

"Little bit everything"

"Eating snacks"

"Everything"

How did the activities go?

"Well, I completed 6 out of 6 tasks in the dice game"

"I got 5 done"

"Me too"

"We succeeded and won"

"We made it to the hut very quickly"

How did you like the forest trip?

"I want to go again on this type of forest trip x4000"

"It was really fun and I want to go again"

"Forest trips are nice and it's fun to play in the forest"

"The best things during the forest trip was to build, eat and the adventure route activity"

In addition to the verbal feedback, I also gathered feedback on a written format, which can be seen in Appendix 5. Afterward I calculated the averages by transforming the biggest smiley into 3, regular smiley to 2 and sad face into 1. The questions and averages can be seen below:

Did you have fun at the forest trip?: 2.5/3.0

Did you learn something new?: 1.9/3.0

Would you like to go on this type of forest trip again?: 2.4/3.0

Later that day at the day care center, one of the children ran up to me on the hallway and thanked me for the nice forest trip and said "I wish we could go to another similar trip very soon!". This was extremely rewarding to me as the feedback was so positive and spontaneous.

Appendix 8 – Pictures from the forest trip destination



Appendix 9 – Adventure educational activity guidebook (in English and in Finnish)

Humak University of Applied Sciences

2021

ADVENTURE EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY GUIDEBOOK

Linnea Hakanpää



I created this activity guidebook for the instructors of Pilke Daycare Centres. The guidebook aims to help utilizing adventure educational methods in early childhood setting. It also gives concrete examples of different types of activities for forest trips, which support the development of children but are also fun. In addition, the example activities are easy to arrange in various surroundings as they require little to no equipment.

The activities are organized under six different areas of learning and each one of them has example activities listed underneath. The activities can be modified to meet the pedagogic goals for different types of groups in terms of age and skills.

While this guidebook is designed specifically for Pilke Daycare Centres, these activities can also be applied in other early childhood educational institutes as well.

What is adventure and outdoor education?

Adventure education is holistic education, and it is based on experiential learning. Adventure educational activities are always goal-oriented, and they aim to contribute the growth and development of individuals as well as the group as a whole. There are plenty of methods to use in adventure education, but factors such as group cohesion, uncertainty, suitable challenge and becoming aware of something new are common in all adventure education. It is possible to implement early childhood educational pedagogic goals to adventure education through different practices and activities. The experience of adventure is always personal, and experiences gained through it enhance the development of children. Nature provides excellent environment to carry out adventure education, and this guidebook has examples of activities listed for planning forest trips.

Instructor's role

The instructor's role in adventure education is to encourage and support the children, both on the individual as well as group level. They also provide possibilities to learn something new and ensure a safe learning environment. The instructor should carry out the activities in a goal-oriented manner and be the leader of the group, though the responsibilities can be divided in accordance with the group's development level. The instructor's task is to encourage the children to be active and curious learners. Additionally, the adventure educational activities should be child-oriented, taking the groups' skill level and individual differences into account.

Pedagogic goals and examples of adventure educational activities for planning a forest trip – the areas of learning

1. THE DIVERSE WORLD OF LANGUAGES

The substantive goals of this learning area include interaction skills, ability to understand languages, ability to form speech, lingual capabilities, lingual memory and vocabulary, and awareness of languages.

- **Trust exercise:** The children get to choose pairs. Then, one of the children is the leader and the other one a follower. The follower gets blindfolded, and the leader can see but cannot talk. The pair roams around the forest area by holding hands, and the aim is to succeed in walking together by trusting one another. After a certain period of time it is time to switch the roles. The aim of this exercise is for the group members to enhance their interaction and communication skills by using different senses and to build trust between the group members. The difficulty level can be adjusted by putting some obstacles in the area that the pairs need to watch out for.
- **Nature alias game:** For this exercise, the instructor prints out pictures of nature and/or adventure related words. The children take turns and explain different words to each other without saying the exact word that is in their card. When a child has guessed the right word, they get the card for themselves. The exercise is over when the cards run out or the time is up. The aim of this exercise is to enhance the vocabulary and lingual skills of the children, and to develop knowledge of the surroundings.
- **Nature memory game:** Elements from the nature will be hidden under toilet paper cartoons. There should be 2 pieces of each element as the aim is for the children to find the correct pairs. Once they have done that they get to keep the elements. Activity ends when all the pairs have been found or when the time is up. The activity enhances children's memory, vocabulary, and knowledge of natural elements.

2. VARIOUS FORMS OF SELF-EXPRESSION

The substantive goals of this learning area include musical expression, visual expression, oral expression, and expression through movement.

- **Artwork using elements from the forest:** For this activity the children pick up nature elements from the forest that will be used for creating an artwork together as a group once back at the daycare centre. The idea is to familiarize children with natural elements and enhance their creativity and co-working skills.

- **Mime:** The children take turns in performing different adventure or nature related words without speaking, only using expression through movement. Others have to guess what they are trying to mime. This activity can be modified with tips from the instructors if the children are unable to guess. Other modification is to have multiple children miming together as a small group.
- **Nursery rhymes:** Rhymes can be a useful tool in the instructor work as those can be utilized when guiding about a certain activity or what happens next. There might also be some imaginary characters such as a guardian of the forest or something similar to motivate the children to take action and participate in the activities.

3. OUR COMMUNITY AND I

The substantive goals of this learning area include ethical thinking, ethical education, the past, presence and future of the local community, and media education.

- **Orienteering in the neighborhood:** The idea in this activity is to spot for example the houses of the children living nearby or some public buildings nearby on the way to the forest or on a separate trip. The buildings might include schools, elderly homes, sport locations or libraries. This activity enhances children's knowledge about their local community and surroundings. The activity can be carried out verbally asking or in the form of bingo, where the instructors have printed pictures of places on pieces of paper that the children should mark which buildings they saw. In this activity the children get to explore and study the neighborhood together as a group.
- **Nature photography:** The children are instructed to take photographs of interesting objects and places in the forest in small groups. Afterward the children are asked to present and talk about their pictures to the rest of the group. The second part of the activity is done back at the daycare centre. In addition, the photographs can also be developed in order to organize nature related exhibition at the daycare centre. This activity requires either cameras or phones that the children can use for taking pictures. The activity enhances the children's teamwork, self-expression, and media skills.

4. I EXPLORE AND ACT IN MY ENVIRONMENT

The substantive goals of this learning area include mathematical thinking, environmental education, and technology education.

- **Signs of seasons in the nature:** This activity can be done at any time of the year, focusing on the changes of seasons. The children's task is to observe different signs of the current season either through a bingo or through instructors' advice and questions. This activity also provides an opportunity to a more in-depth education through discussions within the group about the signs, seasons as well as nature as a whole.
- **Mathematic groupings with natural elements:** The aim of this activity is for the children to complete different comparative tasks in small groups with natural elements. For example, grouping the elements to the correct order based on their size or weight. The difficulty level can be adjusted by altering the number of elements that the children should group. Additionally, the children could be instructed to find and pick up the elements first, so they get to explore the area with a certain objective in mind.
- **Problem solving with sticks:** The children need to figure out in small groups how they could form a certain shape by moving the sticks that are placed on the ground a certain amount. This is a good exercise for studying letters or numbers. Additionally, similarly to the previous activity the children could also be instructed to find and pick up the sticks themselves from the nature. This exercise enhances the children's co-operation, mathematical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- **Forest quiz:** The children are split into teams who answer to different nature related questions. The questions should be designed in a way that takes into account the development level of the children. Thus, it can be altered by making the questions harder or easier. This activity enhances the children's co-operation skills and environmental education.

5. I AM GROWING, MOVING AND DEVELOPING

The substantive goals of this learning area include indoor sports, outdoor sports, nutrition education, and health and safety.

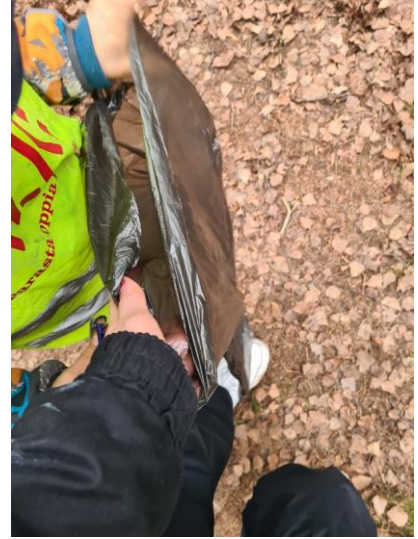
- **Tree tag:** The children choose trees in the designated area and hold on to them. There is one tag who does not have a tree. When the tag gives a sign, the others must run and change to another tree. If the tag touches them before they reach the new tree that person becomes the new tag. This activity increases the children's physical activity and alertness of the surrounding nature and others' actions.

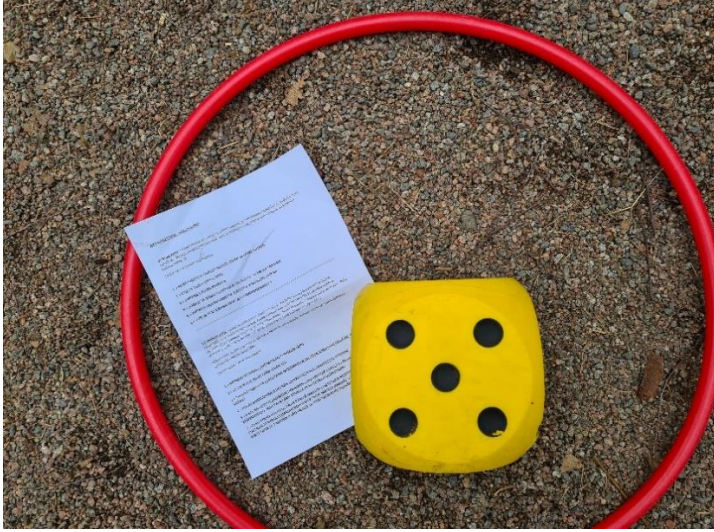
- **Adventure route:** The children complete an adventure route together. The children may move together by holding a rope or the route could be used for a relay. The route may include natural elements that are complemented by different equipment from the daycare centre. The difficulty level can be adjusted to match the target group by for example changing the obstacles or the length of the route. This activity enhances the children's physical activity, teamwork, problem-solving and motoric skills.
- **Treasure hunt:** The children are divided into small groups and instructed to look for a hidden treasure in the forest area that the instructors have hidden prior to the activity. There could also be some clues if the children struggle to find the treasure. Additionally, there could also be multiple things hidden, so that there are more treasures to be found and the difficulty level can be modified by where the treasures are hidden. This activity enhances physical activity, teamwork, and observation skills of the children.
- **Dice game:** In this activity the children need to accomplish certain tasks according to the number of the dice. The assigned tasks can include both teamwork and individual tasks that require for example problem solving, creativity or physical movement. This activity requires a dice, and other equipment according to the assigned tasks.

6. COMPREHENSIVE COMPETENCE

The substantive goals of this learning area include playing indoors, playing outdoors, everyday skills, and educational partnership.

- **Snack break on a forest trip:** Having a snack break in the forest can be an adventurous experience for the children as such. It provides an opportunity for the group to come together and reflect or discuss activities or the trip as a whole. In addition, it also provides a break that is needed for the children to have the necessary energy and focus for the rest of the forest trip.
- **Free playtime:** Free play outdoors enhances children's creativity, self-expression, social and physical skills, and connection with the nature. It is recommended to leave some time for free play during forest trips, so that the children can explore and play how they like. This is also a chance for the instructors to observe what the children prefer to do and can utilize this information when designing future forest trips.





SEIKKAILUKASVATUKSELLINEN AKTIVITEETTIOPAS

Linnea Hakanpää



Tämä aktiviteettiopas on tehty Pilke Päiväkotien ohjaajille. Oppaan tavoitteena on edistää seikkailukasvatuksellisten metodien käyttöä varhaiskasvatuksessa. Oppaaseen on listattu konkreettisia esimerkkejä eri aktiviteeteista metsäretkiä varten, joiden tarkoituksena on sekä tukea lasten kehitystä että olla hauskoja. Näitä aktiviteetteja voi käyttää myös muissa ympäristöissä, eikä niihin tarvita paljon välineitä/valmisteluja.

Aktiviteetit on listattu kuuden eri oppimisalueen alle. Jotta ryhmän pedagogiset tavoitteet voidaan saavuttaa, voi näitä aktiviteetteja muokata tai soveltaa omalle ryhmälle sopivaksi.

Vaikka tämä opas on suunniteltu Pilke Päiväkotien ohjaajille, voidaan sitä hyödyntää myös muissa varhaiskasvatuksen yksiköissä.

Mitä on seikkailukasvatus?

Seikkailukasvatus on kokonaisvaltaista kasvatusta, ja se perustuu kokemukselliseen oppimiseen. Seikkailukasvatuksellinen toiminta on aina tavoitteellista, ja siinä pyritään edesauttamaan yksilön sekä ryhmän holistista kasvua ja kehitystä. Menetelmiä toteuttaa seikkailukasvatusta on monia, mutta yhdistäviä tekijöitä siinä ovat muun muassa yhteenkuuluvuuden vahvistaminen, toiminnan ennalta-arvaamattomuus, ryhmän tasolle sopivat haasteet sekä uuden oivaltaminen. Seikkailukasvatukseen on mahdollista yhdistää varhaiskasvatuksen pedagogisia tavoitteita, ja sitä voidaan soveltaa varhaiskasvatuksessa esimerkiksi erilaisten harjoitteiden ja aktiviteettien kautta. Seikkailun kokemus on aina henkilökohtainen, ja sitä kautta hankitut onnistumisen kokemukset edistävät lasten kehitystä. Luonto luo mahtavat puitteet seikkailukasvatuksen toteuttamiselle, ja tässä oppaassa on listattuna esimerkkejä seikkailullisista aktiviteeteista metsäretkien suunnittelua varten.

Ohjaajan rooli

Ohjaajan rooli seikkailukasvatuksessa on kannustaa ja tukea lapsia, niin ryhmä- kuin yksilötasolla, sekä luoda mahdollisuuksia oppimiselle ja taata turvallinen oppimisympäristö. Ohjaajan tulee toteuttaa toimintaa tavoitteellisesti ja toimia ryhmän johtajana, vaikka vastuualueita voidaan jakaa ryhmän jäsenille heidän kehitystasonsa huomioiden. Ohjaajan tehtävänä on kannustaa lapsia toimimaan aktiivisina ja uteliaina oppijoina. Seikkailukasvatuksellista toimintaa on hyvä toteuttaa lapsilähtöisesti, ottaen huomioon ryhmän taitotaso sekä yksilölliset eroavaisuudet.

Pedagogiset tavoitteet ja esimerkkejä seikkailukasvatuksellisista aktiviteeteista metsäretken suunnittelua varten – oppimisen alueet

1. KIELEN RIKAS MAAILMA

Tämä oppimisalue sisältää seuraavat osakokonaisuudet: vuorovaikutustaidot, kielen ymmärtämisen taidot, puheen tuottamisen taidot, kielen käyttötaidot, kielellinen muisti ja sanavarasto sekä kielentietoisuus.

- **Luottamusharjoitus:** Lapset valitsevat itselleen parit. Toinen parista sulkee silmänsä (voidaan laittaa liina silmille) ja toinen ohjaa kädestä kiinni pitäen, eikä hän saa puhuen neuvoa pariaan. Pareina liikutaan metsässä rajatulla alueella, ja tavoitteena on onnistua kulkemaan yhdessä luottaen toisiinsa. Sovitun ajan kuluttua vaihdetaan osia. Tämän harjoituksen tarkoituksena on kehittää ryhmän jäsenten välisiä vuorovaikutus- ja kommunikaatiotaitoja, käyttäen eri aisteja, sekä rakentaa luottamusta ryhmäläisten välillä. Vaikeustasoa voidaan muokata laittamalla esimerkiksi esteitä alueelle, joita parien tulee väistellä.
- **Luontoalias:** Tätä aktiviteettia varten ohjaaja tulostaa kuvia eri luonto ja/tai seikkailuaiheisista sanoista. Lapset vuorotellen selittävät ja arvuuttelevat näitä eri sanoja toisilleen, käyttämättä kyseistä sanaa mikä kuvassa on. Kun on arvannut oikein, saa kortin itselleen. Aktiviteetti loppuu, kun kortit on käyty läpi tai aika loppuu. Tämän harjoituksen tarkoituksena on kehittää lasten sanavarastoa, kielen käyttötaitoja sekä ympäristötietoisuutta.
- **Luonto -muistipeli:** Luonnonesineitä piilotetaan puolikkaiden vessapaperikartonkien alle, 2 kappaletta/esine. Lasten tehtävänä on löytää parit näistä esineistä. Kun on löytänyt parin, saa esineet itselleen. Aktiviteetti loppuu, kun kaikki parit on löydetty tai aika loppuu. Tämä aktiviteetti edistää lasten muistia, sanavarastoa sekä tietoisuutta luonnonesineistä.

2. ILMAISUN MONET MUODOT

Tämä oppimisalue sisältää seuraavat osakokonaisuudet: musiikillinen ilmaisu, kuvallinen ilmaisu sekä sanallinen ja kehollinen ilmaisu.

- **Taideteosesineet:** Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset keräävät metsästä luonnonesineitä, joista tehdään yhdessä ryhmänä taideteos päiväkodilla. Ideana on tutustua luonnonesineisiin ja tätä kautta kehittää lasten luovuutta ja ryhmätyöskentelytaitoja.
- **Pantomiimi:** Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset esittävät vuoron perään eri seikkailuun tai luontoon liittyviä sanoja ilman puhetta, käyttäen vain kehollista ilmaisuaan.

Toisten tehtävänä on arvata, mitä sanaa yritetään selittää. Tätä aktiviteettia voidaan muokata esimerkiksi antamalla ohjaajan toimesta vinkkejä, mikäli lapset eivät tunnu arvaavan oikein. Toinen tapa soveltaa tätä aktiviteettia on toteuttaa pantomiimeja yhdessä muutaman lapsen pienryhmissä.

- **Lorut:** Loruja voidaan hyödyntää ohjaustyössä, sillä niiden ympärille voidaan rakentaa aktiviteetteja tai niitä voidaan käyttää ohjeistuksen tukena. Myös pitkäaikaisempi satuhahmo (esimerkiksi metsänhenki) voi olla käytössä ryhmällä, ja se voi edesauttaa lapsia motivoitumaan ja osallistumaan aktiviteetteihin.

3. MINÄ JA MEIDÄN YHTEISÖMME

Tämä oppimisalue sisältää seuraavat osakokonaisuudet: eettinen ajattelu, katsomuskasvatus, lähiyhteisön menneisyys, nykyisyys ja tulevaisuus sekä mediakasvatus.

- **Suunnistusta lähiympäristössä:** Tässä aktiviteetissa ideana on tunnistaa esimerkiksi lähellä asuvien lasten koteja tai julkisia rakennuksia lähistöllä, kun ollaan matkalla metsäretkipaikalle tai erillisellä retkellä. Nämä rakennukset voivat olla esimerkiksi kouluja, hoivakoteja, liikuntapaikkoja tai kirjastoja. Tämä aktiviteetti edistää lasten tietoisuutta lähiyhteisöstään ja -ympäristöstään. Aktiviteetti voidaan toteuttaa suullisesti kysellen tai bingon muodossa, jossa ohjaajat ovat tulostaneet kuvia näistä eri paikoista paperille, joihin lapset merkitsevät näkemänsä rakennukset. Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset pääsevät ryhmänä havainnoimaan ja tutkimaan omaa ympäristöä tarkemmin.
- **Valokuvausta luonnossa:** Lapset ohjeistetaan pienryhmissä etsimään mielenkiintoisia kuvauskohteita metsässä ja valokuvaamaan ne. Tämän jälkeen lapsia pyydetään esittelemään ja kertomaan ottamistaan luontokuvista muulle ryhmälle takaisin päiväkodilla. Nämä valokuvat voidaan myös tulostaa ja niistä tehdä näyttely päiväkodille. Tämä aktiviteetti edellyttää kameroita tai puhelimia, joita lapset voivat käyttää valokuvausta varten. Aktiviteetti edistää lasten ryhmätyöskentelytaitoja, itseilmaisua sekä mediakasvatusta.

4. TUTKIN JA TOIMIN YMPÄRISTÖSSÄNI

Tämä oppimisalue sisältää seuraavat osakokonaisuudet: matemaattinen ajattelu, ympäristökasvatus sekä teknologiakasvatus.

- **Vuodenaikojen merkit luonnossa:** Tätä aktiviteettia voidaan käyttää ympärivuoden, erityisesti vuodenaikojen vaihtumiseen painottuen. Lasten tehtävänä on havainnoida eri merkkejä ajankohtaisesta vuodenaikasta esimerkiksi bingon avulla tai ohjaajien neuvojen ja kysymysten kautta. Tämä aktiviteetti luo myös mahdollisuuden perusteellisemmalle oppimiselle ryhmän

keskustelujen kautta, kun käydään yhdessä läpi havaittuja merkkejä, vuodenaikoja sekä luontoa kokonaisuudessaan.

- **Matemaattinen sarjoitus metsän/luonnonesineillä:** Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset suorittavat pienryhmissä erilaisia vertailutehtäviä luonnonesineillä. Esimerkiksi sarjoitustehtäviä, joissa lasten tulee järjestää esineet oikeaan järjestykseen esimerkiksi koon tai painon mukaan. Vaikeustasoa voidaan muokata esimerkiksi vaihtamalla sarjoitettavien esineiden määrää. Sarjoituksen lisäksi, lapsia voidaan ohjeistaa aktiviteetin aluksi itse etsimään ja poimimaan esineet luonnosta. Täten he pääsevät tutkimaan ja tutustumaan alueeseen tehtävän kautta.
- **Ongelmanratkaisua tikuilla:** Tässä harjoituksessa lasten tulee pienryhmissä selvittää, miten tikkuja siirtämällä tietyn verran saadaan aikaan joku tietty kuvio. Tätä harjoitusta voidaan hyödyntää kirjainten ja numeroiden oppimisessa. Edellisen aktiviteetin tavoin, myös tässä harjoitteessa lapsia voidaan ohjeistaa aluksi itse etsimään ja poimimaan tikut luonnosta. Harjoitus kehittää lasten yhteistyötaitoja, matemaattista ajattelua ja ongelmanratkaisutaitoja.
- **Metsävisa:** Lapset jaetaan joukkueisiin ja heiltä kysytään tietovisakysymyksiä luontoon ja ympäristöön liittyen. Kysymykset tulisi suunnitella lasten kehitystaso huomioiden. Aktiviteetin haastavuutta voidaan säätää muuntelemalla kysymysten vaikeustasoa. Tämä aktiviteetti edistää lasten yhteistyötaitoja sekä ympäristökasvatusta.

5. KASVAN, LIIKUN JA KEHITYN

Tämä oppimisalue sisältää seuraavat osakokonaisuudet: liikunta sisällä, liikunta ulkona, ruokakasvatusta sekä terveys ja turvallisuus.

- **Puuhippa:** Lapset valitsevat kukin itselleen puun rajatulta alueelta ja pitävät kiinni siitä. Yksi on hippa, eikä hänellä ole omaa puuta. Hipan antamasta merkistä muiden on juostava ja vaihdettava uuden puun luokse turvaan. Mikäli hippa saa juoksijan kiinni ennen kuin tämä on kerennyt uuden puun luo, tulee tästä uusi hippa. Tämä aktiviteetti kehittää lasten fyysistä aktiivisuutta sekä valppautta tarkkailla ympäröivää luontoa ja muiden tapaa toimia.
- **Seikkailurata:** Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset suorittavat seikkailuradan yhdessä. Rataa voidaan edetä yhdessä pitäen narusta kiinni tai esimerkiksi viestileikin muodossa. Seikkailurata voi pitää sisällään luonnonmateriaaleja, ja siinä voidaan hyödyntää erilaisia leikkivälineitä päiväkodilta. Radan vaikeustasoa voidaan säädellä kohderyhmälle sopivaksi esimerkiksi vaihtamalla esteitä tai seikkailuradan pituutta. Tämä aktiviteetti edistää lasten ryhmätyöskentelytaitoja, ongelmanratkaisutaitoja, motorisia taitoja sekä fyysistä aktiivisuutta.

- **Aarteen etsintä:** Lapset jaetaan pienryhmiin ja heitä ohjeistetaan etsimään piilotettua aarretta metsästä rajatulta alueelta, jonne ohjaajat piilottivat aarteen etukäteen. Lapsia voidaan avustaa vihjeiden avulla, mikäli lapsilla on hankaluuksia löytää aarretta. Aktiviteettia voidaan muokata lisäämällä etsittävien aarteiden määrää ja säätämällä niiden vaikeustasoa. Tämä aktiviteetti edistää lasten fyysistä aktiivisuutta sekä ryhmätyöskentely- ja havainnointitaitoja.
- **Noppapeli:** Tässä aktiviteetissa lapset suorittavat erilaisia tehtäviä nopan lukemien mukaisesti. Nimitetyt tehtävät voivat pitää sisällään sekä ryhmätyötehtäviä että itsenäisesti suoritettavia tehtäviä, joissa edellytetään esimerkiksi ongelmanratkaisua, luovuutta ja fyysistä aktiivisuutta. Aktiviteettiin tarvitaan noppa, sekä tehtävien mukaiset varusteet.

6. LAAJA-ALAINEN OSAAMINEN

Tämä oppimisalue sisältää seuraavat osakokonaisuudet: leikki sisällä, leikki ulkona, arkitaidot sekä kasvatuskumppanuus.

- **Eväshetki metsäretkellä:** Eväshetki metsässä jo itsessään voi olla seikkailullinen kokemus lapsille. Se luo ryhmälle mahdollisuuden kokoontua ja reflektoida tai keskustella aktiviteeteista tai retkestä kokonaisuudessaan. Samalla se toimii taukona, jotta lapset voivat ladata akkujaan loppuretkää varten.
- **Vapaa leikki:** Vapaa leikki luonnossa kehittää monipuolisesti lasten luovuutta, itseilmaisua, sosiaalisuutta, liikunnallisuutta ja luontosuhdetta. Vapaalle leikille on hyvä jättää aikaa metsäretkellä, jotta lapset voivat tutkailla ja leikkiä luonnossa oman mielen mukaan. Tämä luo myös ohjaajille mahdollisuuden havainnoida lasten toimintaa, ja poimia vinkkejä lasten mieltymyksistä tulevien metsäretkien suunnittelua varten.