

**Supporting children's well-being
and meeting the needs of our communities**



Connecting Children to Nature

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Natural Thinkers Leads

Natural Thinkers and working with the community



- ▶ Originated within Lambeth
- ▶ Targeted at anyone with an interest in connecting children to nature living or working within Lambeth
- ▶ Community members involved; teachers, childcare professionals, parents, school gardeners, adventure playground leaders, community centre managers, park keepers
- ▶ Settings range from a nature garden to a childminder's home
- ▶ All activities can be adapted to meet learning and developmental needs





Mindfulness as a key component

Nature's treasures a resource to wellness

- ▶ Healing, calming and awakening our senses
- ▶ Innate connection
- ▶ Helps us become aware our surroundings



Benefits of being outdoors

(Institute of Education 'Nature Nurtures Children' research report 2019)

- ▶ Well-being - increases when children spend time connecting to nature
- ▶ Educational gain – children’s confidence develops enabling children to try new things

(Harvard Medical school 2018)

- ▶ Sun exposure – supporting our body to make vitamin D (vital for bone health and developing our immune system)
- ▶ Exercise – the outdoors encourages active play
- ▶ Taking risks – the outdoors lends itself for children to gain confidence in appropriate risk taking
- ▶ Socialisation – outside encourages children to work together in an unstructured environment
- ▶ Appreciation of nature – connecting to nature, develops appreciation and the desire to look after it





Aims of Natural Thinkers

To promote children's health and well-being through connecting to nature

To create nurturing environments that promotes confidence and resilience

To link the curriculum to outdoor learning

To bring communities together through nature

Inequality in children spending time outdoors
during the pandemic
Reconnecting children to nature film...



The Natural Thinkers commitments and becoming a Natural Thinkers setting

- ▶ 10 commitments that build a framework for settings to work towards
- ▶ Training and coaching on how to meet these commitments
- ▶ Development plan for meeting each commitment
- ▶ 3 yearly renewal of accreditation
- ▶ Support visits



What has been developed?



- ▶ Activities for babies to 3 year olds with a focus on communication and language development
- ▶ Primary school commitments fully link with the EYFS commitments, to support a whole school approach
- ▶ Natural Thinkers' outdoor curriculum - covering the National Curriculum's programme of study for primary science in key stage 1 and key stage 2
- ▶ Materials also demonstrate cross curricular links with STEAM



Respect, conserve, protect our planet

Eat less meat

Awareness is shared with others

Reduce, reuse, recycle

Travel by public transport,
walk when you can

Help reduce plastic waste

