
Helping Gestures in Play and in Rest

The following are responses from teachers to the question—“What have you found that helps to reassure the children and to find their emotional and social balance?”

Fort Building—

One of the things we have seen children do to express their need and longing for security is building forts. At our Tree of Life Nature Playschool in Victoria, BC, this is something that we used to see just in the winter months. But this past school year it has been seen almost daily.

To support this activity, we brought in lots of boxes to add to the blankets, and every day forts of all types were built.

We have seen mainstream articles about fort building and its therapeutic, comforting reassurance to children. Here is one from the Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/05/18/why-kids-love-building-forts-why-experts-say-they-might-need-them-more-than-ever/>

Shared by Kate Lawes, Director of Tree of Life Nature Playschool, Vancouver, BC, Canada

I work and live as an uninvited occupier on the lands of the Lekwungen peoples, of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. I endeavor in my work and life to minimize the harm perpetuated by my presence on this land and stand in solidarity with the sovereignty and resurgence of Indigenous peoples.

Quiet Outbreath in Nature—

One gift from the pandemic with my class has been the amount of time we spend outdoors.

The inspiration has come at rest time: if the ground was dry enough, we distributed children's plastic covered cushions within our wooded playground, a fair distance from each other ideally by a tree or stump. The children sat or lay upon their cushions for a long enough time to really breathe out. Some played with twigs and leaves, some hummed, some tried to get their neighbor's attention, but all of them, including the teachers, had time to feel the wind, watch the birds, see the clouds drift by, some little critter climbing on a blade of grass, see the seasons change. This was a very restorative and healing daily moment.

Shared by Marianne Bockli, EC Director, Ashwood Waldorf School, Rockport, ME