

Comparing Forest Kindergarten and Forest School

	Forest Kindergarten	Forest School
Time	40 hours	180 hours, plus 16 hour first aid
Cost	£365-414	Typically £850-£1000, plus first aid
Qualification Level	<p>Scotland SCQF Level 7, National Workplace Award</p> <p>England, Northern Ireland & Wales Vocational Qualification, Level 3</p> <p>European Qualification Framework, Level 5</p>	<p>Scotland SCQF Level 8</p> <p>England, Northern Ireland & Wales, Level 3 - 18 Credits.</p> <p>European Qualification Framework, Level 5</p>
Requirements	<p>Have access to a natural space and an early years group to take outdoors.</p> <p>Currently work with or have some training in working with early years children.</p> <p>Promotes the rights of the child.</p>	<p>At least 21 years old.</p> <p>Qualified teacher, play worker, youth worker, support worker OR have two years' experience of working outdoors with children.</p> <p>Hold paediatric first aid.</p> <p>Have access to FS site and students. To deliver a minimum of 6 sessions with the same participants in order to observe impact over time.</p>
First Aid	Good practice suggests a basic (8hr) first aid, ideally paediatric should be held all by ELC practitioners.	16hr Outdoor or Forest School specific first aid.
Why?	To be able to make frequent use of natural places for regular sessions with their children.	To run a Forest School programme, with small groups of students, over longer term, in forest/woodland environment.
Who?	Early years practitioners already employed in an early learning and childcare setting, who wish to build their skills and knowledge around taking young children off-site, into natural spaces and lead frequent sessions.	Anyone who wants to become a Forest School Leader, able to set up and run a Forest School programme, who meets the criteria above.
Ages of participants	Early years children - 0-7 years old	Typically 5 years to adult



Pedagogy and Approach		
Core theme	A sustainable, rights-based approach to child-led play and learning in local, natural spaces, focussing on place, people and pedagogy.	A specialised, long-term programme of learning in forests/woodland, concerned with the holistic development of the students through learner-centred activities informed through observations by the Forest School Leader.
Core skills of educator	Develops existing understanding and skills of the early years practitioners around child centred learning and a variety of outdoor/nature-based pedagogies.	Understands the research underpinning the Forest School ethos in relation to physical and mental health and wellbeing as well as play and theories such as Dweck's Growth Mindset.
Reflective practice	Develops existing reflective practice, applied in the context of the outdoor, natural environment.	Reflective practice amongst participants and practitioners is a key component to help recognise achievements, develop emotional intelligence and plan for future sessions. Practitioners are also encouraged to evaluate each session and refer to RBAs, adding any new hazards observed in the moment.
Taking a risk benefit approach	Gains a further understanding of risk benefit analysis and how to dynamically risk assess.	Covered in the course.
Policies, procedures and paperwork	Forest Kindergarten is an embedded provision within an early years and childcare setting. Forest Kindergarten policies and procedures will be developed around existing practice and policy in off-site excursions.	Creates a comprehensive handbook containing policy documents and procedures, e.g. environmental policy and emergency procedures.
The site	Can 'pop up' on any natural sites. Early years practitioners will develop an awareness of and practical policy around managing any site they use.	Will often take place at the same woodland site over a period of months and years, meaning that the FSL has responsibility for managing the woodland environment.



Specific Activities		
Fires and cooking over a campfire	Not covered. Stand alone courses available, but not required.	Covered in depth through the course.
Bladed tools	Not covered. Stand alone courses available, but not required.	Covered in the course.
Climbing trees, boulders, logs etc	Covered in the course. Stand alone courses available, but not required.	Covered in the course.
Environmental care	Care for environment is covered. Stand alone courses available, but not required.	Fauna and Flora ID including woodland management
Erecting temporary shelters using tarps and knots.	Accessing and setting up temporary sites which include simple shelter, toileting, hand hygiene and providing snack outdoors.	Covered in depth through the course.