

Climate action

NDNA members The Old Forge Nursery held a Climate Change Day with the children which was featured on the BBC News. We spoke to the nursery, based in Findern, Derbyshire, to find out more...

What inspired you to hold a Climate Change Day?

"Climate strike" was chosen as Collins Dictionary's word of the year for 2019. Inspired by Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg, young people around the world began climate striking - walking out of school for a few hours to demand action against global warming, and asking people in authority to listen and be more proactive. We held a Climate Change Day in support of this.

Why did you feel it was important to highlight this issue with the children?

As a day nursery, we cannot take the children to march on climate strikes, but we felt very strongly that the under 5s should be educated about climate change and why people are talking about it. We are looking with the children at what actions can be taken at all levels to impact on the growing crisis. Climate change will have an impact on the lives of the younger generation - it is their future and they have a right to know how to protect it.



What did the day involve?

The day focused on limiting our carbon footprint. We spent the whole day outside, cooking over our fire in forest school and turning off all electricity. This required planning as we are a technology-based setting. We solved the issue by charging laptops, tablets and cameras the day before, so children could still be put to bed with music.

What activities did you do?

The children planted in the garden, which helped us to start conversations regarding how plants and trees create oxygen putting it back into the atmosphere. They also looked at recycling.

All craft activities used natural resources, and we made bug shelters, animal shelters and bird feeders to use on an ongoing basis. The children made their own compost bins along with starting the composting process, as something to take home with them and start the conversation with family and friends.

An ice activity was used to explain the impact of a shrinking environment on animals' habitats. All the activities planned helped to explain to the children what Climate Change is.

Did you tailor activities for different ages?

All the activities were available for all the children, and staff adapted conversations to reflect the age of the children. For example, our younger children used the melted ice activity to look at the melting process which relates to the melting icebergs, and they used mud to make footprints which helped to discuss a carbon footprint.

How did the children react?

The children enjoyed their day! The participation and involvement was apparent from the conversations that our older children were involved in. As the day progressed they were asking questions and



were very keen to share the information with parents and carers on collection.

What did parents think?

The positive feedback from parents was fantastic, with many parents thanking us for starting these conversations with their children. Going forward they are very keen for us to grow our involvement with the outdoors and our ongoing commitment to limiting our carbon footprint.

"It's about educating them that this is their planet and they can have an impact"

What happened following the BBC footage?

Following the wonderful coverage, we had on the BBC it was disappointing to see some negative comments online, as a few people totally missed the point of the day. It was not about "brainwashing children" - it's about educating them that this is their planet and they can have an impact. The planet belongs to everybody and we all have to look after it. We are incredibly proud of our children and the interest they took in the subject. They allowed the day to be exciting and informative with their enthusiasm.

What can other nurseries do to educate children about Climate Change?

This is just the start of the Climate Change conversation and we are planning to make changes on a regular basis that will have a small impact, but more importantly will educate the children on what actions they can take. This is something that all organisations and especially nurseries can participate in, because if we all reduce our impact slightly it can have huge results and we must make our children aware of how their actions can affect their future.

You can watch the BBC footage here: <https://bbc.in/2Co2AcF>