

## Editorial

Welcome to the June edition of NIFSA News. Thank you to everyone that has supported NIFSA over the 2017/18 academic year. It has been a massive year and one that has laid the foundations for an even greater year in 2018/19.

## Expressions of Interest

NIFSA is supported in five local Council areas – Belfast (North and South), Lisburn and Castlereagh, Mid-Ulster, Mid and East Antrim and Antrim and Newtownabbey Councils.

NIFSA want to be able to support all organisations wanting to become Forest Schools.

Any organisation that completes an Expression of Interest form in the Forest School Awards website, [www.forestschoolawards.org](http://www.forestschoolawards.org) if they are in one of the five Council areas named above, will be invited to receive a **FREE** days training and get your organisation signed up to begin your Forest School journey.

If you are not in one of the five Council areas you can still attend the training day and receive all of the benefits but you will need to become a NIFSA Member. Cost £100 per annum.

**More information will follow in September.**

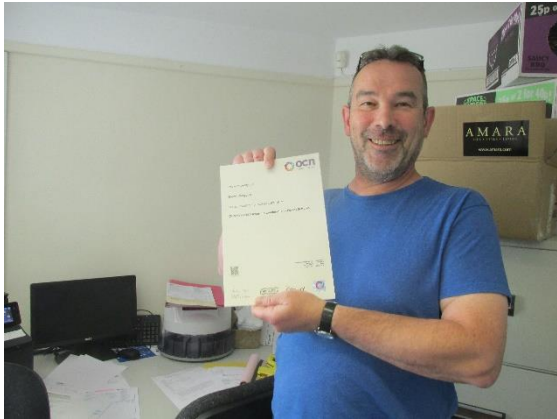
## Hall of Fame

Andrea McFarlane receiving her Level 3 and plaque for Killowen Primary School in Coleraine.



Brighdid McCauley from Duneane Primary School receiving her Forest School Leader Level 3.





Gareth Getgood from Hazelwood Integrated Primary School successfully achieves his Level 3.



Ashleigh Galway, Principal of Currie Primary School awarding Rachel Sholdis her well earned Level 3.

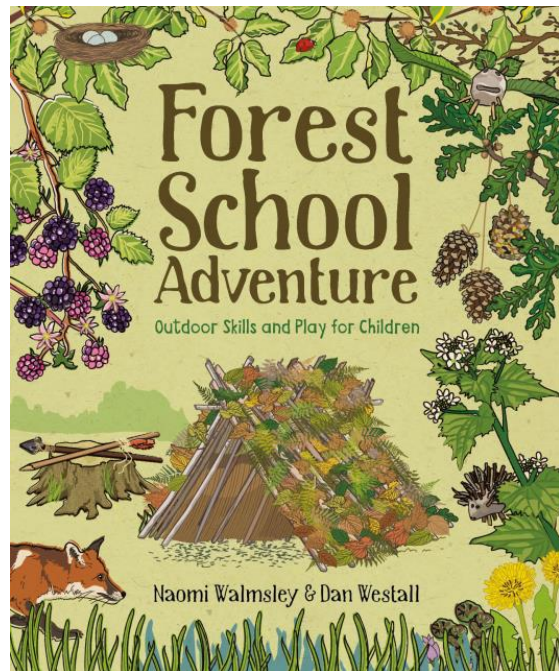


Siobhan McQuaid, Principal of Holy Family Primary School receiving the Level 3 certificate on behalf of Marie-Therese Brankin.

Home of the Forest School Awards



## Book Review



This really is a book that everybody interested in Forest Schools should have.

# **Forest School Adventure**

***Outdoor Skills and Play  
for Children by Naomi  
Walmsley and Dan  
Westall***

***Packed full of practical ideas for  
getting your kids outside, this  
book is your essential  
companion for helping play, craft  
and learn about the natural world  
around us.***

**June 2018 • RRP £16.99 • GMC  
Publications**

Learn how to light a fire without matches, build a shelter to sleep in, cook on a fire, hunt for bugs and much more. From essential bushcraft basics and Stone Age survival skills to joyful outdoor play – **Forest School Adventure** is a book packed with

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ideas to bring your little ones closer to nature and all its magical offerings. Young children will be immersed in imaginative, gloriously messy play and crafts, whilst older ones can get to grips with more complex activities like stone tool making and sourcing water. The book is split into four sections: **Bushcraft, Wild Food, Nature Awareness** and **Games** and features step by step instructions to guide children; to make fire by rubbing sticks together and harnessing the heat from the sun to make flames, create stone tools using sandstone and slate making natural glue from tree sap, harvesting clay from the earth to make pots, making common garden weeds into healing salves and medicines and much more. **Forest School Adventure** can be used as a handbook for helping to identify plants and learning what to eat from nature's larder. It can also be used as a recipe book for making medicines and yummy food or can be used for inspiring Forest school leaders and parents in ways to engage young people with their natural world.

Woven with stories throughout of the authors' real life experiences of living out in the wild, tales of sleeping in a cave in a snow storm, hunting for dinner with bows and arrows and carrying fire through the wilderness to awaken at night time. Whether in an organised setting, a group of friends or a family outing, the fun-filled games will build confidence, bonding and result in happy and energised children.

**About the authors:**

**Naomi Walmsley** and **Dan Westall** are bushcraft experts and educators with over ten years' experience sharing their passion for teaching others how to get the most of the great outdoors, and to do it safely. Together, they undertook a five-month Stone-Age immersion experience in the US, living in the wilderness without any modern equipment, profoundly influencing their lives and teaching. In *Outback 2 Basics* they have built a business of teaching primitive Stone Age and bushcraft skills and other nature awareness activities allowing them to inspire children (and adults!) to connect to their natural environment and their heritage, whilst promoting care and enjoyment of the environment. Dan has worked as a medic and Survival consultant, working behind the scenes on various TV shows and Naomi has written for numerous publications such as *The Bushcraft Magazine*, *Juno* magazine, *Living Woods* magazine and *The Guardian*. They pride themselves on being ambassadors for nature and are passionate about encouraging young people to 'know their world'. Their hope is that **Forest School Adventure** can be used as a starting point to encourage the next generation of care-takers to understand and care for their natural environment. Naomi and Dan are married, have two daughters and live in the heart of Shropshire.

**Nest building**

Have you seen how birds build their nests? Isn't it clever? With no teaching, they instinctively know how to build a nest using just their beaks! Could you do that? Try using some of the materials they do to weave a solid nest. Use grasses, bits of fluff, sticks, feathers, leaves, mud and more.

**AGE** Any  
**TIME** 10-15 minutes  
**TOOLS** None  
**MATERIALS** Any natural materials you can find, e.g. grass, sticks, feathers, mud

To begin, take a rough bundle of grass, make a loop and then weave in the ends to create your nest. Use a shape that is small and keep adding materials, rhoading more materials in, weaving long grasses through. Then just keep adding. See how long it takes you to get something that resembles a bird's nest. It might be harder than you think!



## Forest School Family

NIFSA will be developing the Forest School Family next year. Check out the Forest School Awards diary for events in local Parks. Next academic year we will begin our Forest School Family residentials.



Muddy tree spirits. Bring along a bottle of water in this hot spell to make some mud. Empty the water on to an area of clay (no grass) and puddle it with your feet.

Once it is the right consistency, slap it on the tree. Decorate with leaves and twigs. What magical powers will your tree spirit have? Is it good or evil? Does it have a story to tell? Work with your kids to come up with the most fantastic story!



Join the Forest School Family scheme now or encourage your pupils to join. It is totally FREE and will give you ideas to get outside and enjoy our wonderful environment. Use the qr code to register now.



## 2017/18 figures

The 2017/18 academic year has been an amazing journey for Forest Schools in Northern Ireland.

We have been actively involved in getting nearly 10,000 learning outside. We have 74 new Forest Schools working towards their Forest School Leader Level 3 certificate and 24 newly qualified Forest School Leaders.

NIFSA has over 200 expressions of interest and over 30 organisations have applied for a Forest School Award through their local Council. It is all very exciting.

## Thank you

A huge thank you to everyone that has supported NIFSA over the last academic year. To all my Board Members, the unsung heroes. The local Councils that are supporting NIFSA, the Public Health Agency and finally to Lady Dufferin and the Dufferin Foundation.

