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What's so interesting outside? An exploration into the different affordances of outdoor play spaces and the relationship to early childhood pedagogy PhD Proposal

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# The Great Outdoors? – Children, Young People and Families in Natural and Rural Spaces

University of Northampton  
10<sup>th</sup> September 2015

## What's so interesting outside?



*University of*  
**HUDDERSFIELD**  
Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

**Judith Hunter**

**University of Huddersfield**

# Outdoor Play Spaces & Pedagogy

PhD proposal (June 2015): an exploration into the different affordances of outdoor play spaces and the relationship to early childhood pedagogy



# Research aims

- To gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which children are given opportunities to shape their learning in outdoor environments.
- To explore the interactive relationship between teachers, children and their environment.
- To identify how outdoor environments affect the pedagogy of teachers and practitioners.

# Literature

- Froebel (1782-1852) extolled the benefits for children of outdoor play and being close to nature (Blandford and Knowles, 2009).
- The positive experiences offered to children are dependent on the practitioners' values and expertise (Jarvis, Brock & Brown, 2014).
- The need to inspire practitioners to build learning outside the classroom in natural environments into their teaching practice (Rickinson, Hunt, Rogers and Dillon, 2012).

# Children as co-researchers

- Young children as active participants and competent meaning makers as explorers of their environment
- To identify aspects of the outdoor environment that are of special interest to them and not that imposed by adults.
- The Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2001) brings together a range of methods for listening to young children about their lives.

# Mosaic Approach: Methods to be used by the children

- Observation
- Cameras
- Book making
- Tours
- Map making



(Clark and Moss, 2001).

# Questions and issues

Greenfield (2004: 4) noted ‘ The success of research with young children lies in watching ,listening, reflecting and engaging on conversation; seeking to enter the child’s world in just a small way’.



# References

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