

NATURE

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The child has a privileged relationship with nature; children do not require periods of acclimatization, explanations, rules or instruction manuals to live in nature. Children and nature understand each other quickly and are able to take care of each other. How?

Nature continuously offers the child opportunities to get to know, learn, play and discover. It teaches him/her to capture the details, namely holes, hazelnuts, berries, small insects, to recognise them, give them a name, and return them to nature itself. Nature is not fixed or rigid, so it supports learning that involves having to deal with changes in colours, temperature, the different colours of the sky and the conditions of the vegetation. A child who is attentive to nature is also attentive to life and its beauties.

Contact with the natural elements, namely mud, soil, water, stones and trees, provides an open-air sensory lab that is always available, where children forge a rapport with nature to manipulate, spread, sift, gather, transport, create, fill and empty. This is continuous work that we adults do not understand at times, but inside of which nature and children share the same project.

Nature provides the opportunity to invent multiple games: chase each other, hide, throw... and give free rein to shouting that is often “silenced” in indoor environments. I have watched children of the crèche eat lunch outdoors, during which even a deafening laugh, a tantrum or a moment of anger was mitigated and better handled by the “natural educator”.

Children feel better outside; acclimatization in nature is less complicated and children are happier to go to school. Nature supports them and accompanies them along their difficult path of development. For children, it is a friendly presence and this is a fact that adults cannot change or erase.

At the same time, nature asks the child to take care of it, make the best use of it and preserve it, and to grow with the strong conviction that nature is an asset which is readily accessible, but which cannot be destroyed or impoverished by anyone. Children that grow up with this sensitivity represent the concrete possibility of a future in which nature is truly protected by them.