



WELLIES IN THE WOODS

INSPIRING FAMILIES
TO CONNECT WITH
NATURE



"I said to [my child] this morning, 'We're going to the forest today'. She said, 'ARE WE!? I love the forest!'. She had her coat on ready - she couldn't wait to get there."

"In winter, most weeks I would think there is no way I am going out there - it's too cold or wet - these sessions make sure that we do go outside more and it improves our wellbeing."

Wellies in the Woods is a national Groundwork project supporting young children and their families to enjoy the natural environment on their doorsteps, helping them to foster a deeper appreciation of the benefits of accessing nature, together.

Sessions engage children in guided play and activities centred around well-known books, bringing stories to life in the woodland and creating a safe haven where families can connect, learn, and grow together. Our experiential learning sessions are designed to inspire, educate, and empower, leaving a lasting impression on young minds and hearts.

Wellies in the Woods courses are run in some of the most deprived areas of the country, giving access to nature to families who would otherwise be excluded from guided outdoor play opportunities.

Wellies in the Woods is needed now.

The State of Play, Back to Basics report has declared that *“Play is in danger of becoming a ‘lost art’ for British families, with 21% of parents admitting they no longer remember how to play and struggle to engage their children in creative and imaginative activities that will help their development”.*

The Kindred2 School Readiness Survey 2023, found that an increasing number of families have been unable to access the right early years support in the wake of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. 30% of five year-olds are falling behind their expected reading levels and 20% are behind on their communication and language skills.

The RSPB ‘Every Child Outdoors’ report cites that benefits of playing outside include *‘positive impacts on education, physical health, emotional wellbeing and personal and social skills, including the development of responsible citizens’.*

A study of Wildlife Trusts’ children’s outdoor learning events, 2019 shows that opportunities to learn outdoors were successful in promoting children’s sense of nature connectedness, promoting a stronger desire to engage with nature in future.

All children deserve opportunities to play in safe outdoor spaces and all families should have the right to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of being outdoors no matter where they live.

Help us inspire the next generation with a love for nature, and provide families across the UK with outdoor play and learning opportunities through Wellies in the Woods.

Wellies in the Woods has supported over 1,000 families and with your help we can deliver more sessions in communities most at need across the UK. Your support will ensure that:

- Families connect with nature, inspiring a lasting respect for the environment
- Children engage in social play, increasing confidence among other children
- Parents are given opportunities to engage in play with their children, and are better equipped to take their children to play in outdoor spaces
- Young children's literacy and numeracy skills are developed prior to starting school, preparing them for formal education
- Early years' staff are trained to run Wellies in the Woods sessions

£200

would sponsor **one family** to participate in the eight-week course.

£700

could upskill **20 childcare professionals** to deliver sessions.

£3000

would allow **15 families** to participate in the eight-week course.

Please get in touch with Groundwork's Fundraising and Partnerships team to discuss opportunities to work together: getinvolved@groundwork.org.uk

