



Ekošola



MINDFULNESS AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN THE FOREST
Marjeta Remic
Kranjski vrtci

Mindfulness and sports activities in the forest play a crucial role in children's development



- connection with nature
 - creative playing
- development of their mind, body, and emotions



Mindfulness

- focusing attention on the present moment without judgment
- benefits for mental, emotional, and physical well-being



Definition:

- the state of being fully aware and engaged in the present moment, accepting it without judgment or attachment
- attention to your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and the surrounding environment.

Benefits:

- reduce stress
- reduce anxiety and depression
- improve attention, focus, and cognitive flexibility
- enhance emotional regulation, promote empathy and compassion
- improve overall well-being and life satisfaction

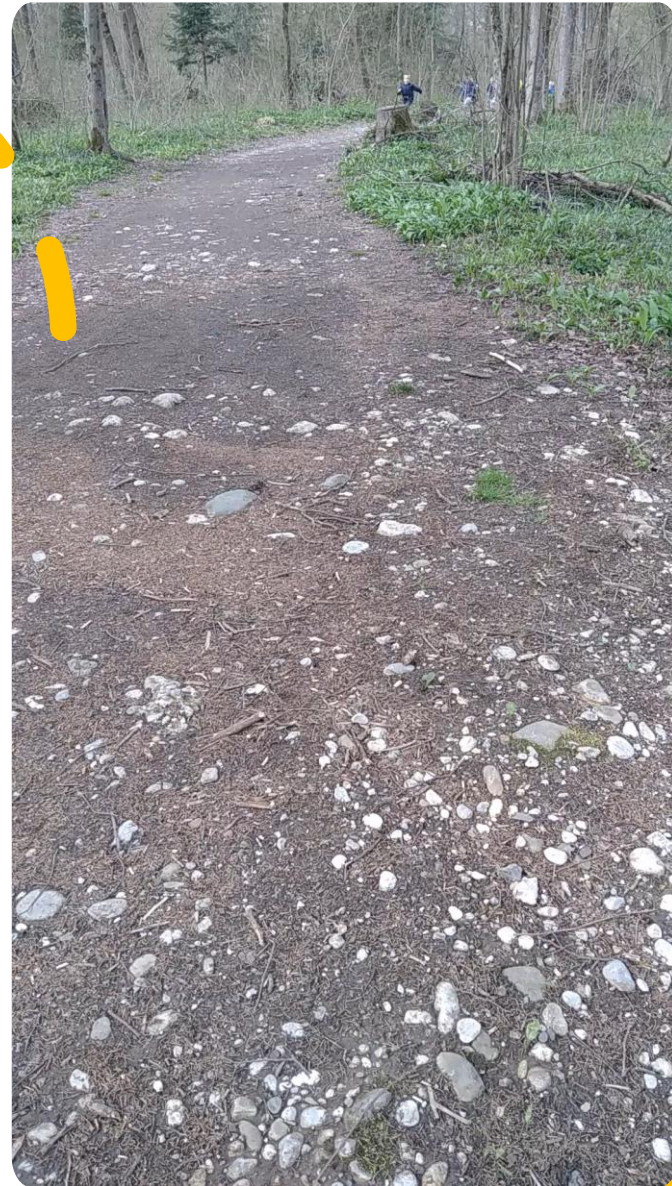
How to practice?

- Mindfulness meditation
- Sitting quietly, focusing on the breath or other anchor points, and observing the thoughts and sensations that arise without getting caught up in them.
- Paying attention to the present moment
- By bringing mindful awareness to routine actions such as eating, walking, or brushing teeth, you can cultivate a sense of presence and appreciation for the simple pleasures of life.
- Practice and consistency
- It takes time to develop.



Sports activities in the forest

- **Safety** (uneven terrain, fallen branches, or wildlife encounters, wearing appropriate clothing and footwear)
- **Leave No Trace** (stay on designated trails, respect wildlife and vegetation, and pack out any trash or waste)



- **Respect for Nature** (tell children to respect and appreciate the natural environment. Teach them about the importance of conservation, wildlife protection, and leaving the forest as they found it)
- **ensure adult supervision**



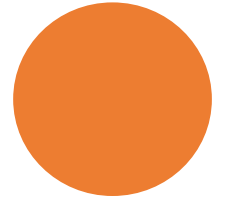


Benefits of the sports activities

- Physical Fitness
- Connection with Nature
- Fresh Air and Oxygen



- Mental Health Benefits
- Cognitive Stimulation
- Vitamin D
- Sense of Adventure
- Social Interaction





- Creativity and Imagination
- Environmental Education
- Healthy Habits

Practice mindfulness and sports activities in the forest

- Activities to suit the age and developmental level of preschool kids.
- Keep the activities simple, engaging, and easy to understand.
- Focus on sensory experiences, such as observing nature, listening to sounds, and feeling different textures in the forest.



Mindful Exploration

- Encourage children to explore the forest environment mindfully.
- Teach them to engage their senses and notice the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of nature.
- Encourage them to touch leaves, smell flowers, listen to bird songs, and observe the colors around them.



Breathing and Relaxation

- Simple breathing exercises and relaxation techniques suitable for preschool kids.
- Take deep breaths, notice their breath, and practice gentle movements that promote relaxation and body awareness.



Silent Observation



- Children sit in one place in the forest and silently observe their surroundings without interference
- They focus on sounds, smells, sensations on their skin, and other natural elements they perceive while being aware of their thoughts and feelings during observation.



Nature Play



- Free play in the forest, using their imagination to create their own games.

Building natural shelters using branches and leaves, play hide-and-seek, hunt for insects, or play with natural materials such as pinecones, bark, and twigs.



Touch, smell, listen, and observe natural materials, being aware of the sensations and perceptions they create.





Physical Exercise in the Forest

- Forest trails are an excellent playground for running, where children develop their speed, endurance, and coordination.



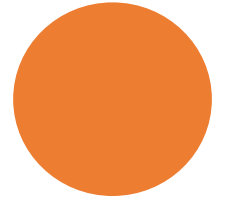


Trees and rocky walls in the forest allow children to climb and develop strength, endurance, and balance.



Mindful Walking

- Children walk through the forest, emphasizing their own steps, sensations of their soles on the ground, body movement, and the environment around them. They observe their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions during the walk and are aware of each step they take.



Forest Observations

Children walk through the forest and observe their surroundings using all their senses.

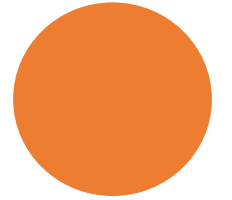


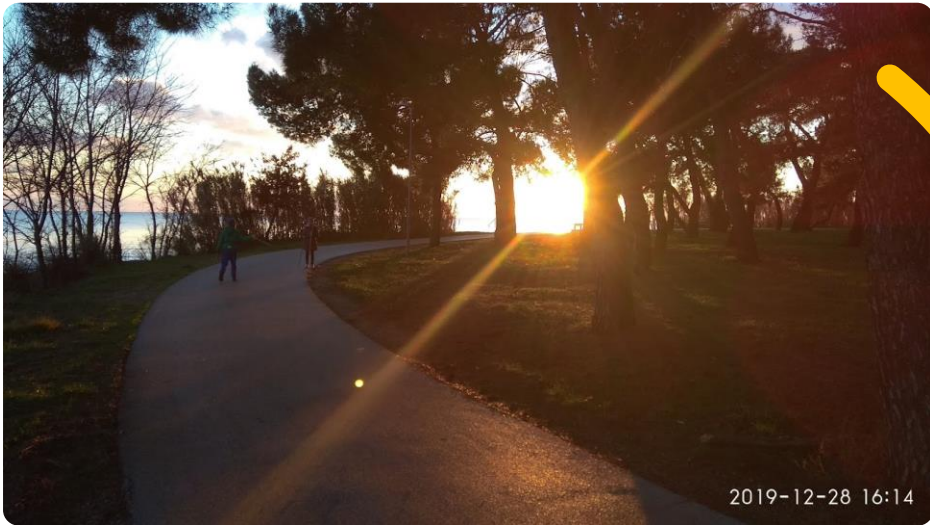
They observe trees, plants, animals, and other natural elements and focus on different sensations, sounds, smells, and colors they perceive.



Sensory Mindfulness

- Children focus on each individual sense during the forest experience. They can be aware of bird sounds, the feeling of soft moss under their fingers, the scent of fresh air, the taste of wild berries, or the sight of sun rays penetrating through tree branches.





The emphasis on mindfulness and sports activities in the forest is of great importance for the well-being of preschool children in several ways.

- Emotional Regulation
- Physical Health
- Cognitive Development
- Nature Connection
- Social Skills
- Mind-Body Awareness
- Creativity and Imagination
- Environmental Stewardship





Thank you for your attention.