



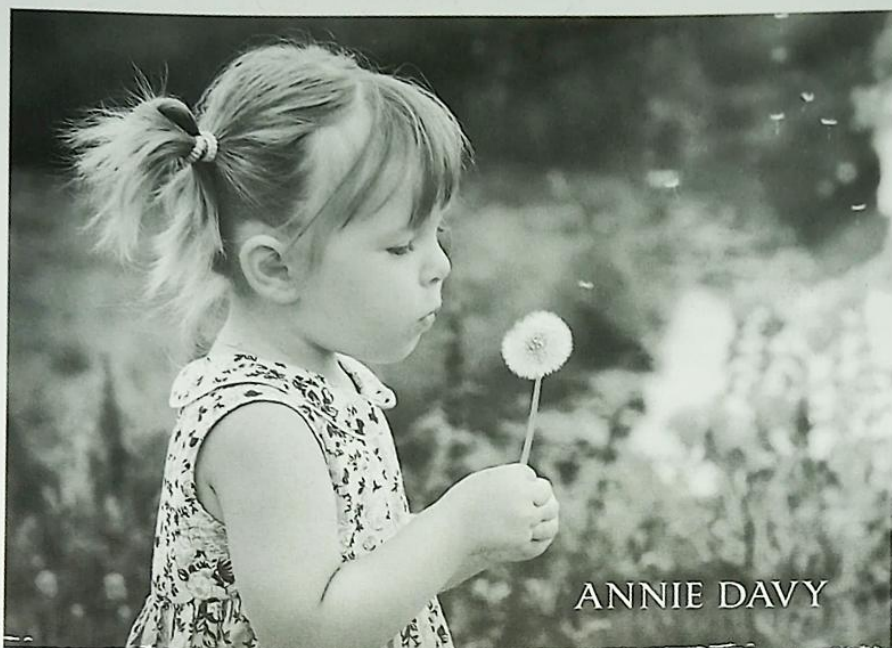
ANNIE DAVY

# A SENSE OF PLACE

Mindful practice outdoors



FEATHERSTONE



# A SENSE OF PLACE

Mindful practice outdoors



FEATHERSTONE





FEATHERSTONE  
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc  
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK

BLOOMSBURY, FEATHERSTONE and the Feather logo are trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain, 2019 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Text copyright © Annie Davy, 2019

Photographs © Shutterstock pp. 10, 11, 13, 15 (sundial), 16 (backpack), 19 (sticks), 20 (pens), 23, 24, 26 (fairy door), 27 (pebbles), 28 (trowel), 32 (snail and magnifier), 34, 38, 40, 41 (children running and sunflowers), 42 (children), 44 (pine cone), 46 (peas), 48 (boy with log), 53 (wasp), 55, 59 (boats), 63, 68 (girl with potato), 70, 72, 73, 76, 78, 79 (child in orange top), 80, 82, 83, 88 (butterfly), 92, 94, 96, 98, 100 (nature pics), 101, 102, 105 (elderberries), 106 (pebbles), 110 and 111, and all illustrations: Annie Davy: pp. 21 (teacher with boy sunflower), 43, 44, 64, 81 Pippa Hamwee: pp. 8, 15 (girl in tree), 57, 64 (girl in leaves), 88 (girl with geese), 89 Hilary Kneale: pp. 64 (feet) Lazaar: pp. 42 (wheelbarrow planter) Rose Macafee: pp. 29 (boy crawling in water), 46 (ice eating), 50 (boy in snow) Kay Gatehouse, Schnell Photography: all other photos.

Annie Davy has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc does not have any control over, or responsibility for, any third-party websites referred to or in this book. All internet addresses given in this book were correct at the time of going to press. The author and publisher regret any inconvenience caused if addresses have changed or sites have ceased to exist, but can accept no responsibility for any such changes

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB 978-1-4729-5365-0, ePDF: 978-1-4729-5366-7, ePub: 978-1-4729-5367-4

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Text design by Lynda Murray

Printed and bound in India by Replika Press Pvt. Ltd.



All papers used by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc are made from 100% recycled paper and are sourced from well managed forests. The manufacturing processes comply with the regulations of the country of origin.

To find out more about our authors and books visit [www.bloomsbury.com](http://www.bloomsbury.com) and sign up for our newsletters

#### Acknowledgments

With deep gratitude and appreciation to my teachers of mindfulness and nature connection and my many companions in learning about our beautiful Earth. Thanks to all at Grandpont Nursery School for their help with this book. Thanks to Lynda Murray for the design and layout. Thank you to my daughters Loren, Gemma and Ella who have taught me more about life than they can possibly yet know.





# Contents

Author preface .....	6
Introduction .....	7
About this book .....	7
Ecological identity and Earth-mindedness .....	7
Structure of the book .....	8
The structure of each chapter .....	10

## Part 1 *Setting the scene – landscapes for learning in a changing world*

### Chapter 1: Changing lives, changing landscapes

Human developments and challenges of our time .....	11
A systemic and ecological view of child development .....	12
Each child and adult's experience is unique .....	13
Changes over time .....	13
Understanding the system of culture, values and beliefs .....	15
'Nature deficit disorder' or a sense of place? .....	18
A sense of belonging to a place .....	20

### Chapter 2: A place to play – learning with the landscape

Roots of outdoor Early Years practice and concerns of our time .....	22
Landscapes not laboratories .....	23
Different kinds of play equipment and affordances of the environment .....	24
The seven criteria for outdoor play .....	25
Learning with head, heart, hands .....	28
A word about technology .....	31
Scale and pace .....	32
The psychology of reading messages .....	32
Transitions .....	33
Biophilia and ecophobia .....	35





## Part 2

## Doorways, windows, skylights – learning through the senses

### Chapter 3: Sense doorways – sight, sound, touch, smell and taste

What are the sense doorways?	37
Early sensory development	38
The sight doorway	41
The sound doorway	43
The touch doorway	44
The smell doorway	45
The taste doorway	46
Sense doorways, memory and learning	47
Sensory differences	48

### Chapter 4: Sense windows – survival, wellbeing, independence, meaning

The sense windows – SWIM	49
The sense window of survival	50
The sense window of wellbeing	54
The sense window of independence	57
The sense window of meaning	59
Sensory processing and integration	64

### Chapter 5: Sense skylights – values for a living world

The sense skylights are values	65
British values outdoors – values for the living world	67
Pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning values outdoors	68
Kindness and compassion	69
Freedom, rights and responsibilities	70
Justice, fairness and the rule of law	71
Fairness and consequences	72
Purpose	73
Connection	76



## Part 3

## A sense of place – mindfulness, resilience and community

### Chapter 6: Mindfulness pedagogy in the Early Years

What is mindful pedagogy?	77
Mindfulness – origins and sources	78
Being too busy and not having enough time	78
The four As: awareness, attention, attunement and affordance	79
Focusing on breath	81
Savouring slowness and being still	84
Spontaneous and seasonal responses to the affordances of nature	86
Companionship learning	87
Appreciating beauty and awakening gratitude	88

### Chapter 7: Roots of resilience – a systemic approach

Being and becoming: what we want for children	89
Resilience for you as teacher and carer	90
Resilient children – a systemic view	93
The four Gs: gateways to nature, connection and resilience	95
Resilience in your setting	102

### Chapter 8: Nature pedagogy, community, and conscious action

Environment matters – tending the garden	103
Education for sustainability	104
A pedagogy for nature	106
From source to resource	108
Think global, act local	109
Conscious community action	110

References and further reading	115
--------------------------------	-----





Nature is a rich resource for learning and every child has the right to spend time outdoors. In this thoughtful book, Annie Davy looks beyond nature as a simple resource to acknowledge and embrace it as a fundamental part of Early Years practice.

**A SENSE OF PLACE** encourages you to give young children immersive experiences in nature so that they can learn about, explore and understand the world around them. 'Narratives' and case studies uncover the potential richness of our children's experiences with nature, while the 'On reflection' and 'In practice' sections invite you to reflect on your current practice and offer practical activities and ideas that you can use straightaway.

The tried-and-tested strategies in this book will support children's wellbeing, resilience and learning journeys through mindfulness, with a focus on learning outdoors and connecting with the world. Whether your setting has just a small patch of earth and sky or a whole meadow for outdoor play, this invaluable guide helps you make the most of the space you have. What's more, Annie's infectious enthusiasm for nature will leave you optimistic about our children's future on this beautiful planet.

**ANNIE DAVY** has experience that spans Early Years teaching, inspection and training. A freelance writer and facilitator, she has a track record of incubating successful community projects, connecting people and transforming environments. As Head of Early Years in Oxfordshire, she led an award-winning service for 12 years and is founder and director of several community-based projects. She is passionate about 're-wilding' and connecting to nature – within workspace, learning space and in our day-to-day lives. You can find her through [www.thenatureeffect.co.uk](http://www.thenatureeffect.co.uk).

