



# Creating Natural Connections

## Expressive Arts



# CUMBERNAULD LIVING LANDSCAPE

Cumbernauld is incredibly green - over 50% of the town is open space, which includes parks, nature reserves and much more.

The Cumbernauld Living Landscape team are improving these outdoor spaces for people and wildlife and helping everyone in the community connect with nature on their doorstep.

Cumbernauld Living Landscape is a partnership between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, Sanctuary Scotland, James Hutton Institute and TCV – The Conservation Volunteers.

In January 2019, we were awarded a £1.37 million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, along with generous support from North Lanarkshire Council and other donors, amounting to a £2.1 million investment in a four-year programme putting wildlife and people at the heart of Cumbernauld's future.

This funding allows the Cumbernauld Living Landscape team to deliver transformational improvements to Cumbernauld's environment with a long-term change in the way the town's people connect with nature. Our collaboration with the community and local schools, countryside rangers, landscape architects, and landowners is key to our success.

We have a long history of working closely with the local community. Since 2013, we've been working together to improve Cumbernauld's outdoor spaces including improving accessibility to parks, restoring peat bogs to reduce flooding, creating wildflower meadows to support insects, connecting young people to nature through outdoor education sessions, improving woodlands by planting native tree species, and supporting health and wellbeing through our Wild Ways Well programme.

We continue to work in partnership to ensure our activities remains responsive to the needs of the community and instils long-term community ownership.

PROJECT  
PARTNERS



FUNDERS



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## Introduction

Welcome to the Curriculum for Excellence outdoor learning methods for expressive arts. The following activities can be used by education practitioners as a tool to integrate and explore outdoor learning with art.

As an educator you know your children, where they are and the learning path they are on. You also know the Curriculum for Excellence, how best to deliver that. These are simple exercises that can be adapted for all ages and school years as you see fit. It will still have the same impact across all ages.

### What drives our desire to provide CPD for educators?

There is a growing mental health issue occurring in the UK affecting 1 in 10 young people. This is often due to factors in their lives including but not limited to worries about body image, poverty, bullying, physical or mental abuse, parental breakups, and bereavement. Incredibly 70% of young people are living through this without interventions at the appropriate time or age (Mental Health Foundation 2020).

Children are aware of the hierarchy in lessons. Peter is the best at Maths or Amy at English but that boils down to the children realising that they are not good at this subject, they feel silly or fear that they may be ridiculed if they ask a question. These invisible children are all around us. When you put them into the outdoor learning environment, that hierarchy is gone, they all have equality and have the opportunity to be excellent.

As a conservation charity you may wonder why we care about outdoor learning? The simple fact of the matter is that when people, regardless of age, are healthy, enjoy the outdoors and understand the benefits that nature and the environment give to them, they appreciate their experiences, nature, and the environment more. We believe that this appreciation builds to respect for that environment and a level of stewardship enabling the individual to care more, take action and promote our valuable greenspaces. Together people and nature can thrive and learn.

Thank you.

Tracy Lambert  
Project Manager – Creating Natural Connections  
Funded through National Lottery Heritage Fund

# Continuing Professional Development

## Natural art

### Session in depth:

This activity encourages young people to create art from nature around us. The natural environment has so many shapes, sizes, textures and sounds that we could create pieces of art with. Without breaking any branches off trees and being careful to pick flowers that are plentiful create an image using nature. Let your imagination soar, the aim of this session is collaboration.



**\*Please do not pick up sharp objects, or anything made by people. Watch for dog fouling or plants which could cause illness – see overleaf.**

### Materials required:

Nature provides

Optional extras:

Paint – see wind chimes above

String

### Location:

local greenspace/school grounds

### Instructions:

Set the class into groups and let nature inspire them. Could be based on a topic previously discussed in class.

### Questions/Reflections:

What did you create?

How can you describe this (the subject of study) to me?

Why did you choose the subject e.g., tree, flower?

# Continuing Professional Development

## Natural art plants to avoid

Plant	Risk
Nettles and thistles	Skin irritation
Buttercups	Skin irritation and toxic
Foxglove	Extremely poisonous
Bluebells	Extremely poisonous
Fungi	Some species are extremely toxic

If you have children who are habitual hand to mouth feeders of anything they touch, keep them away from the list above.

### Sources:

Wood chimes <https://greenmumsblog.wordpress.com/>

Snail art - <https://leagreen.derbyshire-outdoors.org/>

Once you make your own natural artwork why not share with us on our social media pages to let others see it? We're on Twitter and Instagram as **@WildCumbernauld** and Facebook as **Cumbernauld Living Landscape**

Once you have completed your session, please remember to dismantle your artwork to leave no trace. Our habitats are special and while an arts session is a great example to be creative, it is important to remove all trace, to prevent others who may not be as responsible as you, to damage the habitat and leave a mess. Remember to leave no trace after all your sessions.

# Continuing Professional Development

## Natural painting/buddy art

### Session in depth:

Buddy art is a great way to build communication and to have fun at the same time. Groups split into twos (or threes if necessary) with each person given a piece of paper.

A twig becomes a pencil or art brush.

Grass is used by rubbing to create the colour green. Mud becomes paint, flowers are used to create different shades. Let nature become your medium.

### Materials required:

Clipboard

A4 paper

### Location:

Greenspace

### Instructions:

The task is to only use things that they can find in nature to create a picture that their partner sees behind them. The person painting the picture cannot turn around they can only follow the instructions from their partner. The person who is describing the scene looks at an area in front of them and tells the painter behind them what they can see and whereabouts on the paper they would imagine it to be.

E.g., Instruction - "there is a tree on the left which would go from the bottom of the page all the way to the top, it's a big tree."

The aim is to build communication.

Alternatively, just let the children release their inner artist and go with the flow – child-led play is so much more rewarding.

### Questions:

How did it feel to be instructed?

Was it easy to follow the instructions? Was there good communication?

Was it easy to find resources to create your artwork?

### Reflections:

Do you think it would be easier to do this again?

# Continuing Professional Development

## Mini figures in nature

### Session in depth:

This is an opportunity to complete a challenge, have fun and bond. Bring a toy out into nature and use it to interact with the landscape. The key is to unlock imagination in a fun and engaging method.

### Materials required:

Small toys such as Lego figures  
Action figures etc.

### Location:

local greenspace (woodland is better)

### Challenge

### Points

Holding a daisy

5 points and 5 extra for getting correct flower

Climbing a tree

5 points

Flying through the air –  
superhero style

20 points – how can you capture the motion without your hand in the way???

Rock climbing

15 points - what can you use for a rockface?

Playing hopscotch

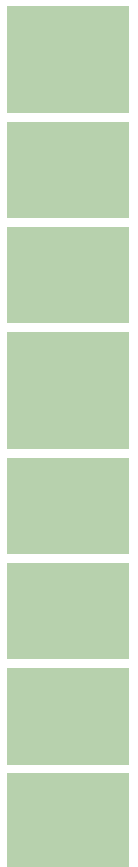
20 points - might need chalk!

Saving a life

50 points - How does your action figure do it!?

Relaxing

20 points - not as easy as it sounds.



### Questions:

What did you create and what inspired you to do that?

### Reflections:

How much fun did you have, and could you get more points next time?

# Continuing Professional Development

## Make a rainbow from nature

### Session in depth:

We all love a rainbow, but can the children create one from nature? This activity tests their observation, listening and collaboration skills.

### Materials required:

Sellotape

Piece of paper or card A5 is fine

A good eye for colour and a sense of adventure

### Location:

Greenspace or school grounds

**Please note the plants on pg5 to avoid**

### Instructions

Each child has a piece of card or paper with the instruction to seek out the colours of the rainbow, the children can work individually or together as a team to find the colours the quickest. This can become competitive or stay simple - the choice is yours and the children. Items are collected and sellotaped to the card.

Another thing to note is not all the colours that you would suspect to come from the plant or grasses chosen to create the rainbow will produce the same colour when crushed. This could be an alternative to collecting the colours i.e., a leaf or blade of grass. A rainbow could be drawn onto the card prior to going outside with the instruction to see if the subject created the colour, you were looking for once it was crushed on to the paper. Some pink flowers produce yellow, and grasses produce blue shades.

Explore what could be causing this.

**Clue. Colours change due to minerals, sugars, fluids, and pigments within the plant. There are also chemical reactions with the paper and in some cases – such as with hapo zome, fabric materials.**

### Questions:

How difficult was it to find all the colours?

What time of year would be best for this activity?

Where do you think you could find them?

### Reflections:

Do you like rainbows and why?

Did the plants produce the colours you thought they would, and did you test them first to create your rainbow?



# Continuing Professional Development

## Story stones

### Session in depth:

Story stones are a great way to spark imagination. Young people today often have difficulty having social interactions, with many selectively muting. The artwork on the stones is not important but rather the stories that they can help draw out. The art could be a matchstick figure, a cloud, musical note, anything that pops into their heads within reason. It could even be a simple word, but better if it is a drawing of some sort. Once the art is on the stones, they are sealed and left to dry. The stones can then be placed in a bag (pillowcase is fine). Each participant takes out a stone and makes up a simple sentence about the picture on their stone. This continues around the group with the story following on from the person before. The accumulation of sentences can be noted down to create the full story.

### Materials required:

Flat stones  
Pens for stone art  
PVA glue to seal

### Location:

Indoors/outdoors

### Instructions:

Take a stone and unleash the imagination. Both sides of the stone can be used to add depth or choice to each tale. Have someone recording the story either in written word or using technology – but remember to write it out later. Put the story together and see how everyone contributed to the bigger picture.

Each story can have an associated comic strip drawn by a participant and these could even become a booklet for the group, school funds or just a community project. The choice is in the hands of the participants.

### Questions:

Ideas for stones - What inspires you in nature? What is your favourite plant or wildlife animal? What's the weather like today? Can you draw a sound, action or emotion?

### Reflections:

Did the group make a continuous story? Did they enjoy the experience. Do they think they could use that to connect with the wider community?

# Continuing Professional Development

## Create a vase of flowers



### Session in depth:

This session takes the class or group outside to pick flowers to complete a vase. The vase can be drawn in the class before going out

### Materials required:

Cardboard (cereal box can be used)

Pencil – to make the holes

### Location:

greenspace with flowers

### Instruction:

Draw and decorate a vase on the bottom half of the cardboard (A5 size is fine). Once outside find a grassy area and place the card vase up and poke holes through the card into the grass being careful of fingers. Find a greenspace with plenty of flowers, you may need to limit the number of flowers picked for each card – in nature we should not take more than 10% of a species in a given area to allow it to grow again and flourish for the next year. The alternative is to draw some flowers before going outside to find others to complement their drawings.

### Questions:

What shape did you make your vase?

What flowers did we find?

Is it the right time of year and could it be done with different twigs for example in winter?

### Reflections:

Do you have anyone in mind to give your vase to?

## Curriculum links for all activities

Activity	Equipment required	Key links to curriculum
Natural art	Anything you find in nature i.e., twigs, grass etc. Paints String	
Natural painting/ buddy art	Clipboards – something to lean on Paper	
Mini figures in nature	Mini figures /toys	
Make a rainbow from nature	A5 card or paper	
Story stones	Stones Acrylic pens	
Create a vase of flowers	Carboard Pencil	

## References

Mental Health Foundation, 2020, Children and young people, Mental health for all, <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people>

Piccininni C., Michaelson V., Janssen I. and Pickett W., 2018, Outdoor play and nature connectedness as potential correlates of internalised mental health symptoms among Canadian adolescents,



**Cumbernauld Living Landscape** is a partnership between the Scottish Wildlife Trust, North Lanarkshire Council, Sanctuary Scotland, the James Hutton Institute and TCV – The Conservation Volunteers.

[cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk](http://cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk)

5-7 Napier Way, Wardpark North,  
Cumbernauld, G68 0EH

**T** 01236 617113

**E** [cumbernauldl@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk](mailto:cumbernauldl@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk)

**f** CumbernauldLivingLandscape

**t** @WildCumbernauld

Partners



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