

Barefoot Safari

Embrace the physical and tactile challenge of exploring a short trail barefooted.

2-5

Physical
Education
and
Wellbeing



The concept of the barefoot trail can be traced back to a Bavarian priest, Sebastian Kneipp, who believed that walking barefoot in the snow or over dew had therapeutic properties. There are now many barefoot parks across Germany enjoyed by all.

Walking barefoot does train the muscles of the foot arches and therefore helps to avoid flat feet and can counteract transferred pain to the back, knees or hips.

Moreover going barefoot is a great **health and wellbeing** activity encouraging children to relax, improve their physical awareness and be more **mindful** of the sensations that they are experiencing in the moment.

Equipment

Identify a short pre-determined route. This could be a pathway over grass, along a wooded area, behind bushes or even a pop up trail on tarmac

Incorporate a series of different surfaces en route such as: bark mulch; rounded gravel, fir cones; sand; pebbles; long grass; leaf litter and not forgetting some mud!

Areas of loose parts may need separating by sections of natural ground.

Large scrubbing brushes, water and towels at the end of the trail are advisable for cleaning up dirty feet!

Activity

Work with the children to prepare a short route and simply go for it! Encourage descriptive vocabulary of sensations and how the experience makes them feel. Consider having diversions available or a hand to hold over more challenging sections.

The route can be made more permanent by removing the upper layer of earth, inlaying that with weed suppressant membrane and then backfilling with the desired loose material. Alternatively sections of the trail comprising loose parts could be contained with a wooden trim.

Always check the trail for hazards before proceeding.



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