

Questions to help you decide about Forest School training and trainers

Your research about or conversation with a potential trainer might explore a variety of questions about the training course, such as:

- ☐ What does the training cover?
- ☐ Does the course include First Aid training with paediatric and outdoor elements?
- ☐ Do I get a recognised certificated award, and from which awarding body?
- ☐ How long have you facilitated Forest School training specifically?
- ☐ How do you model the Forest School ethos and principles in your training?
- ☐ What format do your training courses take? Intensive weeks? Weekends once per month? Days spread over a year?
- ☐ What type of venue is used?
- ☐ How much of the content is delivered outdoors?
- ☐ How much does the course cost?
- ☐ Where does the course take place?
- ☐ If you require overnight accommodation, what are the local options?

You may also want to find out about the trainer themselves, so may wish to explore a variety of questions such as:

- ☐ What experience and/or qualifications do you have relating to ecology and conservation management?
- ☐ Do you have past and current experience of facilitating Forest School yourself? With which client groups?
- ☐ Do you have experience of working with my chosen client group?
- ☐ What sorts of CPD have you been involved in recently yourself?
- ☐ How long have you been training educators?
- ☐ Have you recently visited a setting like mine that facilitates Forest School?
- ☐ Are you connected to any national organisations?
- ☐ Are you connected to a local Forest School network through which I can access ongoing support and CPD?
- ☐ What Level 4 or equivalent training qualification do you hold?
- ☐ What is your own area of interest within the practical skills: fire, tools and/or woodland management?
- ☐ How many Level 3s do you train each year? What proportion complete the course? What proportion pass the qualification?
- ☐ How can you cater for my particular learning requirement (if relevant)?
- ☐ How do you support students outside of the face-to-face days with you?
- ☐ What equipment do I need to have? What equipment is provided?
- ☐ Do you have your own Public Liability Insurance and Professional Indemnity Insurance in place?

One other potentially illuminating way to research who to train with is to speak with other Level 3 Forest School leaders who trained with different people; ask them about their own training experience, perhaps using questions such as:

- ☐ Do you feel your training prepared you well for the role of Forest School leader?
- ☐ What was the learning environment like?
- ☐ How many days did you spend face-to-face with the trainer in the woods?
- ☐ What personal qualities did the trainer bring to the course?
- ☐ How did you feel after a day of training?
- ☐ Was your training fun?
- ☐ Was your training challenging? In which ways?
- ☐ How have your perspectives altered as a result of the training?
- ☐ Did you feel supported during the course and do you still feel supported post-qualification?