

# 04 In the Forest/Garden – story making

➤ **Let the children explore the forest or the garden with a camera. Who was on these trails just before the children? Which animal lives here?**

In the project "In the Forest" the children work with a camera. In small groups they discover the forest or garden, independently select plants, small animals and places as motifs and photograph them independently.

Back at the kindergarten, the children select their best shot and develop their own story from it.

Exploring nature is very well suited to combine experiences from the real world with digital life. The project "In the Forest" addresses the children's ability to observe and discover and at the same time stimulates their imagination. The children's concentration is exercised when taking pictures of the forest or garden. In the subsequent development of a story, they use their imagination and develop linguistic skills.

## ➤ Preparation

Prepare the children for the project "In the Forest / Garden" and discuss with them what they have in mind. You need patience, peace and respect if you want to discover the forest together with the children. Talk to them beforehand about a respectful approach to small animals and nature. To make sure they know what their future task will be, you can show them one or two examples: Fly agarics or colourful autumn leaves.



Try out the devices (e.g. the tablet) that you will use for the project "In the Forest / Garden" yourself before the children use them and see if everything works. Familiarise yourself with the handling of the devices so that you can explain it to the children and respond to questions. The children should also be allowed to test the devices in advance.

To gain a deeper understanding of the new media technology, we recommend that you read „*Module 2 – Basic Knowledge of New Media Technology*“ from the interactive *Kit@ manual*.

**Age:** 3-6 years

**Group:** whole group or small groups

**Level of difficulty:** ● ● ● ○ ○

**Time and effort:** ● ● ● ● ●

### Materials:

For implementation:

- Tablet, smartphone or digital camera

For postprocessing:

- PC or laptop
- Beamer and screen
- Printer and laminator

### Area of education:

- Maths and Natural Sciences
- Literacy and Communication
- Aesthetic-cultural education
- Media education

### Media pedagogical goals:

- Design photos and use media creatively
- Try out short cuts and perspectives
- Playful media-creative adaptation of social space and nature
- Dealing with media technology



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## ➤ Project Implementation

On arrival at the forest / garden and with the tablet in hand, the children start their discovery tour. All plants, small animals, trees, leaves or places in the forest, which the children find particularly beautiful or interesting, are captured with the camera. If it is not possible for each child to have their own tablet, divide the children into groups of 2-4 children. The group now goes on a motif search together. Make sure that each child in the group can take at least one photograph. Give the children 20-30 minutes so that they can take their photos in a relaxed atmosphere.

Back at the kindergarten, the children and you take a look at the photos. To make sure all children have a good view of the pictures and they can be displayed in a sufficiently large format, use your laptop, PC or beamer and screen. Examine which pictures are good and help the children to recognise why other pictures are less suitable (sharpness, cropping, etc.). As a result, each child should choose one photo that they find most beautiful or exciting. The selected photos can now be printed and eventually laminated.

The challenge for each child is to develop a story based on his or her favourite image. You can help the children by asking them the following questions: "Who visited the plant before you?", "Who lives in this heap of leaves?", "Where is the fox family now?", etc.

### Learn more:

- *Module 6 – Photo*

**Tip:** It is also possible to record the children's stories with the help of the tablet. The story doesn't have to be written down immediately and the children can listen to their works again and again when the recordings are burned onto a CD, for example. For more information, I recommend „*Module 8 – Audio*“ from the interactive *Kit@ manual*.



*My story about the hornets' nest*

	<p><i>Once upon a time, there was a hornets' nest. The queen and her friends used to live there. The queen laid the eggs for new babies and her friends helped her to look after them.</i></p>
	<p><i>One day the hornet queen heard a flying magpie. The magpie was warning everyone in the forest: "A big storm is coming!" The hornet queen told her friends and then all of them flew away.</i></p>
	<p><i>And today my friends and I found the hornets' empty nest.</i></p>

Photo credit: Zuzana Lynch

Stick the photo of each child on a piece of paper and then write the story. The children's works can be hung up in the group room.

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## ➤ Postprocessing

Talk to the children later about the photos taken in the forest and look at their posters and stories together. The children can explain again how they took the photos, what they paid special attention to and what they enjoyed most. It is exciting to learn how the children perceived their surroundings while taking pictures.

**Tip:** Use the seasons to discover nature again and again. What is different in autumn? Where is the mushroom in spring? Does the fox cave still exist? Photographs already taken can be supplemented with new ones. In this way a yearly cycle of photos is created. At the same time, the children's media literacy is practised again and again.



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Zuzana Lynch



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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