***Megatastic Movement Elizabeth Appleton***

*Running, hanging, splashing, jumping, spinning, stamping, throwing and thwacking…*

…just a few of the kinds of movement that participants said they regularly saw children doing at Forest School. My underpinning thought for the workshop was that if children are doing these movements – and tens of others – regularly when they free play they must be part of a healthy human development…and yet many of the same moves are unacceptable or impossible in the classroom – where most children spend most of their time. Add to this the research that suggests a lack of movement in infants (through the use of deep curved car seats and strap in buggies) has led to “as many as half of children have an underlying problem with undeveloped physical skills”\*; and that core strength in children had dropped by 80% between 1998 and 2008\*

We begin to see that when Forest School leaders enable child led play and child led movement they are doing remedial work that supports children’s holistic development - emotional, cognitive, social, creative and physical.

After this we played! To remember the feelings of excitement from different movements we balanced, and swung and climbed and rocked and laughed and shouted! We looked at knots and ropes that enhanced the movement possibilities of the woodland we were using, practised tying them, and we explored what it felt like in our bodies to stimulate senses that help us manage our bodies in a busy world.

At the end we considered the possible psychological impact of constantly inhibiting natural movement in a being that relates to the world through his or her senses and set off with an intention to facilitate movement play in our Forest Schools with love and enthusiasm right across the land!

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10974849/Many-children-unable-to-hold-a-pencil-or-sit-still-at-five.html>

\*Sandercock, G., et al. *Ten-year secular changes in muscular ﬁtness in English children* Foundation Acta Pædiatrica 2011 100, pp. e175–e177