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TALKING ABOUT KEEPING DRY AND WARM

by *Dr Claire Warden*

You may wonder why there is a picture of a penguin chick on this page. It is there because this newsletter is all about keeping dry and warm and penguin chicks are a brilliant example of how to survive the winter weather.

There are two things we can learn from the chick:

1. Increase the distance from the skin to the cold air. (It is many layers and inches thick in the case of the chick.)
2. Stop the wind going through clothes. (The chick has a dense waxy layer that stops the wind reaching their skin. It also understands about how to huddle together to keep warm and put your back into the wind.)

Playing outside is every child's right and as adults we can make it happen every day. Children will sleep better, eat well and use energy which makes everyone have a calmer day. It is good to accept our Scottish weather as it won't change - open the door and go outside. There is such a thing as poor weather, but with the right clothes and a bit of knowledge we can embrace it.

A podcast is also available if you prefer to listen to a conversation about this topic

www.virtualnatureschool.org



TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING DRY AND WARM

by Dr Claire Warden



Layers. Think layers of clothes that will trap the air like the penguin chick. Air is a good insulator so don't make the layers fit too tightly. There needs to be a balance between being wrapped up and being able to move. Warm tights for everyone and waterproof suits are great all year round to keep the warmth in, and the wind and rain out.



Food and drink. Food gives our bodies the energy to keep itself warm. Eat before you go out to make sure that the body is fuelled up. No food = no energy = cold body. If you are going on an adventure take some extra food to top up energy on the way.



Ears. They can get cold quickly as the blood in them is close to the surface and loses heat quickly. Covering ears is more important than the whole head. The head doesn't lose heat any quicker than anywhere else it just feels cosy when you put a hat on.



Feet. Your feet are the temperature regulator for your body. There are 72,000 nerve endings in your feet and they send messages to your brain. Warm feet make all the difference to making you feel comfortable. Fluffy socks or woollen socks are the best, like your granny used to knit!



Hands. They are far away from your body so they can be affected by how the warm blood can reach them. Mittens allows fingers to have 'group warming' and putting an old sock with the end cut off and a thumb hole over the mitten keeps it on. Knitted fingered gloves are not very warm so wear a couple of pairs and change if they get wet. Warming up a large pebble in water and then having in your pocket can make a great handwarmer.



Wrists. Where the blood comes to the surface at the wrist, feet, fingers and ears it loses heat. Often coats and gloves don't overlap so they let the heat out and the cold in, so make wrist warmers from an old sock or a tube of fleece. Buy waterproof over gloves if you can to keep gloves dry and warm.



Movement. The body generates heat when it uses energy. It uses that energy whenever we move - running, skipping, and jumping. Think about the amount of movement you have when you are outside. Sing songs, rhymes and leap from puddle to puddle to get the blood moving around your body..



Warm Drinks. On a cold day having a warm drink makes you feel cosy. It gives you energy and raises your core temperature which in turn warms the rest of your body. Make a flask of warm water and a healthy snack and take it with you on your walk ready for when you stop for a rest.



People. Some people have bodies that give out a lot of heat as they burn calories, others do not. Cuddling or sitting by a friend can heat you up as you share someone else's warmth. Making a shelter, even under a large umbrella warms up the air around you and can make all the difference to feeling dry and warm.





TALK ABOUT... KEEPING DRY AND WARM

by Dr Claire Warden

Talking with children helps them to develop their language, but also helps them understand why we do certain things to keep dry and warm when we play outside. Use these images to discuss how to get ready to play outside in the wintertime and record children's ideas in your Floorbook@.

- Talk through the pieces of clothing and use the moment as a chance to talk about left and right, up and down, making pairs of socks, playing games to line them up to put them in order.
- Avoid arguments and use the hood of a coat or outdoor suit to store the spare gloves or a hat if they don't want to wear them at first.
- Talk about where you want to go and what you want to do so you can pack a rucksac to take with you.

