

# Snow Day at Forest School!

## 5 top tips for managing your Forest School in the snow

from Forest school trainer & practitioner Jackie Roby

*Everyone loves a Snow Day but this weather phenomenon presents new challenges for Forest School leaders.*

If snow is severe enough to cancel school, you shouldn't be hanging out under trees: the added weight on branches and shelters makes them more vulnerable to collapse. However, there are times and weather conditions that mean that snow, school and Forest School can all happen.

Let's assume you've checked your site and it's looking lovely (and safe!). How are you going to navigate this new-found wonderland?

### Tip 1: Layer up

The difference one extra item of clothing can make is immense, especially on extremities such as hands and feet. Wellies aren't known for their insulating properties so extra socks are a must. Gloves are always handy (*sorry..!*) but unless they're waterproof, they will quickly become wet while playing in snow. A spare, dry pair is essential.

### Tip 2: Redirect excited behaviour

Even adults get excited about snow, so asking children to be sensible on the rare occasion we experience it is likely to be a losing battle. The key here is to think about ways for you to all get what you want. For example, throwing snowballs at a target is safer than throwing them at people.

### Tip 3: Embrace what you've got

We're all used to slipping and sliding in mud, so ice may not be the challenge we think it is. Talk to your group about what to expect and ways of moving across icy areas. If you've ever played mud slides, why not have a snow slide? And if mud freezes, it's easier to walk on, so your Forest School site might actually be easier to navigate as a result.

### Tip 4: Find ways to create warmth

Get the fire on, have hot drinks and full tummies, and keep moving. But what do you do if one of your group really starts to feel the cold? If they're wearing wellies, a bucket of warm water can be really handy for frozen feet. Simply stand them, wellies and all, in the bucket and let the warm water get to work. Smooth pebbles kept in a pan of warm water by the fire, dried off and used as hand warmers, work too.



### Tip 5. Know when to call it quits

Forest School takes place in all weathers, but this should come with a caveat: until it stops being fun. If your group is unhappy then there is no point in carrying on for the sake of it. Remember, the younger your group is, the closer they are to the cold ground and the less likely they are to be able to tell you they're feeling cold.

### Now you've begun to think about the changes you can make, what else could you do?

Jackie Roby is a Forest School trainer and practitioner offering online and in-person Forest School training and CPD and runs Go Wild Forest School.

[www.gowildededucation.co.uk](http://www.gowildededucation.co.uk)



Further reading: lots of great tips & guides on the Muddy Faces [Outdoor Hub/Outdoor Clothing section](#)

