

6. Starting with babies: babyNENE

Froebelian research makes a particular knowledge contribution to sector understanding about nature-based pedagogy for babies and toddlers.

“NENE in babyNENE stands for Nature Engaging and Nature Enhancing, which we think sums up an attitude of mutual care and responsibility towards babies and the natural world.”

(Kemp, Josephidou & Bolshaw, 2026)



Look at the photo. Think about the experience from the baby's perspective and what they might be feeling.



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What the research tells us

Even in challenging urban environments, it is possible to develop nature-based pedagogies for babies and toddlers ⁽²⁾.

- The Froebelian-inspired concepts of being attentive, responsive, nurturing and questioning can help educators think about how to develop their nature-based practice with babies and toddlers, moving the focus from 'doing' activities to 'being' with the children.

- Small, incremental, manageable changes can result in considerable improvements in babies' access and enjoyment of nature-based experiences. For example, aspects of daily routines such as sleeping and eating can be incorporated into outdoor pedagogy.
- Both 'visible' changes (such as adding more natural features) and 'invisible' changes (such as re-thinking how time is spent) can make a meaningful difference.



Small changes can have a big impact. Introducing nature-based pedagogies in baby rooms can have a 'butterfly effect' within settings and beyond.

Find out more:

1. **Kemp, Josephidou & Bolshaw (2026) babiesoutdoors.co.uk**

A free toolkit for educators is available **on this website**.

Explore the project page **on the Froebel Trust website**.

2. **Kemp & Josephidou (2025) 'A Froebelian inspired nature pedagogy in urban babyrooms'**

