

Victoria Richards known as 'Little Chickens'

Growing gardens and wildlife connections

Background

Victoria is a home-based childminder in Rhosllanerchrugog. Since gaining Early Years Hygge accreditation in 2022, she has developed an organic garden space. Designed to support biodiversity and act as a living classroom it allows children to engage with nature, explore seasonal changes, life cycles and learn about wildlife care.

What are they doing differently?

Victoria has created a living environment where children grow and care for plants whilst developing meaningful connections with wildlife. The approach focuses on hands-on learning through:

- growing food and plants throughout the garden; flowers, herbs, fruit, and vegetables that provide natural loose parts like rose petals and herbs for children to use in play, potions, and role-play activities
- creating wildlife habitats for birds, squirrels, and mini beasts, offering chances for observation and discovery
- a raised pond with goldfish allows children to engage through feeding and watching
- providing authentic crockery, natural materials, and loose parts including shells, sea glass, pinecones, and pebbles encourage open-ended exploration

Children help care for the plants and pick fresh produce including blackberries, apples, raspberries, and peas straight from the garden beds. This hands-on approach creates meaningful learning about food origins, seasons, and natural growth processes whilst providing deep connections with the living world around them.

Impact ...

- Strong connection with nature and food sources as children notice when produce has ripened and ask to pick it
- Increased wildlife awareness and learning how to care for living things
- Natural materials and living elements provide opportunities for emotional wellbeing and calm
- Children better understand the seasons and cycles

“ Giving children time to slow down, explore nature, and follow their own ideas is at the heart of what I do. The garden is more than a play space, it's where they build confidence and curiosity. ”