

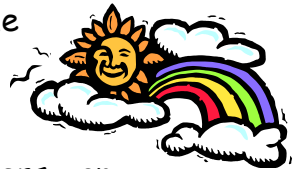
# What Do We Learn Outdoors At The Nursery?

Outside play offers many different opportunities to being indoors. We believe that the outdoor and indoor learning spaces are equally important and both should provide a rich and stimulating environment. This download tells you a bit more about why being outside is so valuable and some of the fun things we do outdoors.

## Why is being outside so important?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which is the government's guidance document for early years practitioners, says that settings must '**ensure that children have opportunities to be outside on a daily basis all year round**'. Here are some of the reasons why provision of outdoor learning is so valuable:

- **Health and wellbeing** - fresh air and open space allow children to be energetic and physical.
- **Active learners** - many children learn best when their experiences involve the freedom to move around a lot.
- **Thinking BIG** - being outside means more space for activities to be done on a larger scale, such as huge paintings, building with big objects, or running around!
- **Change** - the outdoor environment is always changing with the weather and the seasons, and is full of surprises that provide learning opportunities.
- **Multi-sensory space** - the outside space naturally offers an environment to stimulate all the senses.
- **Qualities and skills** - the kind of play that can happen outside allows the children to develop valuable qualities and skills and to grow as individuals.



## What qualities and skills do children develop when they are outside?

- Decision Making
- Exploring
- Negotiating and turn taking
- Independence and resourcefulness
- Problem solving
- Creativity and initiative
- Care for the environment and other people
- How to take risks and how to stay safe
- Organisation
- Having a go
- Control and co-ordination

## What kind of things do the children do outdoors?

We have lots of resources for outdoor play. These can be used by the children in many different ways and provide the starting point for their learning experiences. Here are some of the things they do when they are outdoors:

- **Den making** - using blankets, fabric, cushions, cardboard boxes, pop-up tents, leaves, poles, branches.
- **Mixing and pouring** - using funnels, jugs, bowls, spoons, water, food colouring, petals, leaves.
- **Big painting** - using water and big brushes on the path or splattering coloured, runny paint on large sheets of paper against a wall or fence. Using scrubbing brushes, combs, sticks, plungers to make big marks.
- **Digging, fetching and carrying** - in the sand, a garden bed, or the 'Mud Kitchen' using spades, spoons, wheelbarrows, buckets, pots and pans or trucks.
- **Big building** - making large constructions using tyres, wooden planks, wooden blocks, cardboard boxes.
- **Water play** - using pipes, funnels, jugs, bottles, watering cans, mixing with sand or soil.
- **Gardening** - in small pots or garden beds, using spades, trowels, forks, watering cans - planting seeds and watching them grow.
- **Doing the washing** - washing dolls clothes or pieces of fabric, hanging them on a washing line with pegs.
- **Ride-on vehicles** - cars, tricycles, scooters and trucks, learning to peddle, stop, go, turn and park.
- **Climbing and balancing** - on the climbing frame or on ramps they have made with planks.
- **Watching bugs** - observing insects, making homes for them out of leaves, twigs and stones.
- **Music making** - things sound different outside - making things to bang or shake, or wind chimes to hang up.
- **Reading and listening** - sitting in a quiet corner and looking at books, listening to a story or making a puppet show.



## Risk taking and staying safe

'Risk taking' means lots of things. Using a hammer to bang a nail, building a big construction that might topple over, or trying something for the first time, all involve a little bit of risk. This is an important part of a child's development. Being able to take a risk builds confidence, involves making decisions and provides opportunities to work together. Risk taking relies on having a safe and secure environment with observant adults to support and extend young children. We help children to understand safe

boundaries, know their personal limits, and help them meet their own challenges. The outdoor space is the ideal place for these experiences. **Come and see!**

- ❖ If you would like to help the children at the nursery with some gardening or another outdoor project, please let us know.
- ❖ We record your children's outdoor learning and achievements with photos and notes in their Learning Journals.
- ❖ Now that you know what we get up to outside, don't forget to dress your child in clothing that can cope with being physical and getting messy. However, we do have some all-weather suits, should you forget!
- ❖ You might like to try out some of the activities we do at the nursery, when you are outside at home or at the park.

We hope you found this information useful. Please contact the nursery if you have any questions.

The following websites and articles provided useful material for this download:

- [www.lotc.orf.uk](http://www.lotc.orf.uk)
- [www.nationalstrategiesstandards.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.nationalstrategiesstandards.dcsf.gov.uk)
- [www.teachingexpertise.com](http://www.teachingexpertise.com)
- *Meeting the challenges of outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage*  
Adapted from a leaflet produced by Jan White