Outdoor Classroom Day

The outdoors can be the beginning of deeper learning and exploration, providing opportunities to extend classroom activities into the natural environment just beyond the window. This allows learning to become more immersive, meaningful, and connected to the world around us.

Embracing the outdoor classroom enables lessons to be adapted to the age, abilities and interests of the children, while supporting different subjects and making use of the natural resources and opportunities available in the environment.

By allowing children to see, feel, smell and touch as part of their learning experience, we can transform their perception of learning. Outdoor experiences make learning more tangible and meaningful, helping children to make connections, develop curiosity, and become more actively engaged in their learning.

BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR PLAY

- Physical development - Activities such as running, hopping, skipping and jumping help children to develop their gross motor skills, co-ordination, balance, and physical strength.
- Cognitive development - Exploring the natural environment encourages children to be creative, inquisitive, solve problems and observe changes in the world around them.
- Social-emotional development - Promotes opportunities for interaction among peers, sharing, developing friendships, collaborating, navigating conflict, communicating and understanding their feelings.
- Healthy habit formation - Normalising getting outdoors and engaging in physical activity promotes a positive attitude towards a healthy, active lifestyle by embedding this into the child's routines, in the hope that this continues throughout their life.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that children aged 5-17 years should do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity every day.

www.who.int/initiatives/behealthy/physical-activity

GET INVOLVED

You can participate in Outdoor Classroom Day by taking your usual planned lessons outdoors. This provides an opportunity to maintain curriculum objectives while creating a more engaging and hands-on learning experience for children.

- Nature Mathematics - Incorporate counting and a number of activities using natural resources found outdoors, such as cones, acorns, sticks or pinecones. Children could count, sort, group, measure and compare natural objects, or use them to explore patterns and shapes.
- Outdoor Reading - Bring your class story into the outdoors or provide opportunities for individual, paired or group reading in the playground or garden. Being outside can create a calm and enjoyable environment, helping children to engage with stories while supporting their well-being and regulation.
- Nature Art - Encourage children to collect natural materials, such as fallen leaves, sticks, twigs and pinecones, and use them to create artwork. For example, children could make autumn animals using leaves and sticks, or use leaves to create prints and paint pictures of hedgehogs. Additional materials, such as clay, can be incorporated to extend their creativity and exploration.

*Remember to wash hands thoroughly after playing with clay.

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