

Outdoor Play Policy

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child's development. It provides children with experiences which enable them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. In doing so it provides a rich context for the development of their language and encourages positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.

Outdoor play should be seen as an integral part of early years provision. At Fun Foundations, whilst children are involved in self-chosen activities, they move freely between indoor and outdoor areas using the resources which best meet their needs on a daily basis all the year round.

The aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for children's learning in all areas of the nursery curriculum. Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum.

The provision and planning for outdoor play, just as indoor play, must reflect the diversity and richness of the experience and developing interests of the children.

The outdoor environment

"The outdoors is the ideal environment for experiential learning, because it offers unique opportunities to be creative, to move around, to be noisy and to take risks. The outdoors is full of special stimuli such as weather, sounds, smells and textures which can enrich and enhance a child's learning environment.

Being outdoors enhances all aspects of children's development: social, physical, creative, cultural and personal. Children with these skills well-developed are better able to learn and to retain that learning."

Foundation Phase The Outdoor Learning Handbook 2009

The Outdoor Area

The outdoor area is well laid out and provides for

- challenging and exciting play
- safety
- different levels of play - flat, hilly, sloping
- grassed and hard areas (including straight and winding paths) should be wide enough for safe, easy play with a safety surface area for climbing equipment
- shady areas
- growing/digging areas - garden soil, compost, tubs, vegetable and flower beds.
- wild areas - long grass, wild flowers and trees, logs and shrubs to attract insects
- a sandpit with hard surround to provide sitting areas and to facilitate easy sweeping; also a sturdy cover protection
- quiet, reflective areas and busy, moving play areas

- developing exploration and imagination
- opportunities for large scale experiences

Planning Outdoor Play

Adults must consider the following points

- the specific purpose of the outdoor play
- individual, co-operative and parallel play
- skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes to be acquired/developed by the children • appropriate use of resources
- staff interaction, guidance and support
- balance/breadth of curriculum provision
- alteration, addition or removal of resources • quality play

Learning Opportunities in the Garden/Outdoors

There are many opportunities for the following developmental areas to be enhanced outdoors in varied and challenging ways:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Language, Literacy and Communication

Mathematical Development

Knowledge and Understanding of the World Physical Development

Creative Development

Welsh Language Development

Further information is available concerning the areas of learning in the outdoors in the 'Foundation Phase The Outdoor Handbook, 2009'. There is a hard copy available in nursery.

The Role of the Adult Outdoors

Adults should be actively involved with children in their games and activities where appropriate and should not be solely in a supervisory role.

Adults should be:

- talking with children in a variety of ways (conversing, discussing, questioning, modelling and commentating)
- helping children to find solutions to problems
- supporting, encouraging
- extending their activities by making extra resources available and providing new ideas
- initiating games and activities
- joining in games and activities when invited by children
- observing, assessing and recording
- being aware of safety issues
- being aware of every child's equal right of access to a full outdoor curriculum which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or disability
- evaluating observations in order to plan appropriate resources and experiences

- providing role models for appropriate clothing i.e. hats, coats, boots to suit weather conditions In these ways adults are making positive contributions to the children's play and setting up challenging situations for children to experience.

Recording and Assessment

Records of the children's development and progress when outside are made through observations and assessments. These observations are then recorded in their individual Development Files. Examples of the children's work may be kept and exhibited on display in the nursery.

Safety in the Garden

- When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff must look out for safety and remove any objects such as cans, bottles or needles which may have been left by others.
- Staff outdoors must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the garden for any reason unless another member of staff has taken over responsibility.
- Whenever there are a large number of children in the garden, there must be at least two members of staff outside with the children maintaining appropriate ratios according to the age of the children.
- It is most important for staff to move around the garden constantly so that all areas are adequately supervised. If more than one adult is in the garden, each person should position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is unsupervised.
- At the end of the session the garden should be scanned carefully in case children should be left outside unsupervised.
- Hot drinks should not be taken into the garden.
- Water is provided for all on hot days and sun cream applied.
- Parents and students helping outdoors must never be left in charge of the garden.
- All equipment should be stored away sensibly and carefully, to allow for safe and easy removal next day.
- If a child is injured he/she should be handed to a member of staff indoors as quickly as possible for treatment so that supervision of the garden is interrupted for as short a period of time as possible. In the event that there are several members of staff in the garden, it would be safe for one of those adults to administer first aid to the child
- Details of the accident must be written up as soon as possible in the incident book. The child's parent must be informed of the accident and treatment given.
- Climbing apparatus should be set out on the safety surface areas whenever possible. If the hard areas are used, safety mats should cover the surrounding area.
- Children's clothing should be monitored carefully e.g. unfastened shoelaces and buckles, sandals, scarves and ties on anoraks which are too long can easily cause accidents, particularly on wheeled toys.
- Wheeled toys should only be used on hard play surfaces.

- If it is necessary for an adult to put toys away whilst children are still in the garden, there must always be at least one other member of staff supervising remaining children in the garden.
- Children are encouraged to climb and balance independently and to be aware of the level of their own abilities. Adults should offer encouragement whilst being aware of their own safety.
- Encourage children always to look before they move on the slide, or when jumping off apparatus; also encourage children to leave space between themselves and the child in front when crossing planks or climbing up/down apparatus.
- The adult: child ratio must always be maintained in the outdoors environment.

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