

Learning background: Outdoor experiences



We do this because it:

Helps children to develop positive relationships	Playing outdoors gives your child the opportunity to make and play with friends. When children play together they use their imagination, they create and build things together, and they work things out and talk about what they are doing/trying to do. They learn more about the feelings of others (sharing and turn taking), games with rules, not everyone can be the winner etc. They chatter and talk, communicating in a range of ways. Younger children learn from the games and play of older children, they extend their vocabulary to describe and ask questions about the outdoor world.
Develops their physical strength and skills	Providing your child with opportunities to move about in bigger spaces, to be physically active will help them to develop and refine a full range of large and small movements. Developing muscles, by running, climbing, balancing etc. leads to skilled control of tools and equipment. Children practice these skills every time they go outside, carrying, moving items, mixing, sawing, gripping and grasping- all these things are better experienced in the outdoor world, they are more meaningful and can help children to play with others and learn how to cooperate and make/build something together. They are gaining control of their body through movement.
Supports the development of communication	Children communicate at a range of levels when there are other children/adults to play with. They learn from each other, increasing their vocabulary, making up the rules of games, they negotiate through play, how to take and ask for a turn etc. A parent can help with organizing some of the things that children need, (clothing for messy play and weather conditions). By suggesting, prompting and modelling things that will extend children's play, by giving children information about what they see, hear and are interested in.
Encourages children to be independent and take risks	Allowing your child to investigate and experiment outdoors helps them to learn about the properties of materials found outside, messy play, mud and sticks etc. Water play, sand play are all valuable experiences that children need to have to understand how our world works. Climbing whether that be on specialist playground climbing equipment - or balancing on a fallen tree trunk on a woodland work brings with it risks – children need to experience situation that mean that they have to think about the risk, falling off a tree trunk often means that the child will try again, in a different way, with help to start with and then with confidence when they can balance independently. Children cannot acquire these skills unless they are given the opportunity to find out for themselves.

