



Outdoor play

At Stepping Stones Nursery we are committed to the importance of daily outdoor play and physical development in all children regardless of their age and stage of development. All activities will be made accessible to children with learning difficulties and disabilities to ensure all children are able to freely and independently use the outdoor area and physical play opportunities to best effect.

Children need regular access to outdoor play in order to develop their large and small muscles, experience an environment that is different to the inside of the nursery and more importantly access sunlight in order to absorb vitamin D more effectively.

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

Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development. It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active.

Stepping Stones Nursery has a large outdoor area, which is a private area designated for all Nursery children. The outdoor area is well laid out and provides for:

- challenging and stimulating play
- safety
- different levels of play - flat, hilly, sloping
- shady areas
- growing/digging areas - garden soil, compost, tubs, vegetable and flower beds. A free digging area is easily provided so that children can enjoy the physical satisfaction of digging; also to provide opportunities for finding mini-beasts, planting tubs and garden for different seasons, sowing seeds, harvesting vegetables providing opportunities for environmental science, caring and responsibility
- sand & water play
- 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

To ensure balance and breadth of provision, adults planning an outdoor activity need to think carefully about what it should include and why. They need to have clear goals for children's learning, at the same time they need to be responsive to children's enthusiasm and their interests. Within the planning there should be flexibility to meet individual children's needs as they arise during the session. Resources should be available to enhance and extend their play. Staff will make notes of children's' achievements (through observation) to record on individual Developmental Profiles.

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***
- ***Communication & Language***
- ***Physical Development***
- ***Literacy***
- ***Mathematics***
- ***Understanding of the World***
- ***Expressive Arts & design***

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 commenting)
- 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 (if appropriate)
- 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 following observations and assessments. Alongside these observations, staff make judgements about their achievements in relation to the descriptors and record these on the Early years Foundation Stage.

Examples of the children’s work may be kept and exhibited, or put into Special Books, and photos are used to document both the process and outcome of their activities. Assessments of the children’s experiences of the outdoor area are shared with parents verbally and included in each child’s Developmental Profile.

This policy was updated on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date to be reviewed
<i>August 2017</i>	<i>Adele Stone</i>	<i>August 2018</i>