

Fledglings Day Nursery Outdoor Play in Early Years

“The best classroom and the widest cupboard is in the open air”.

Margaret Macmillan

At Fledglings Day Nursery we believe that:

- **Outdoor play is central to young children’s learning.**
- **Indoors and outdoors is viewed as one combined and integrated environment.**
- **Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where adults interact with children to extend their knowledge, skills and concepts.**
- **Outdoor design and layout is given careful consideration.**
- **The outdoor classroom offers children the opportunity to use effective styles of learning – playing, movement and sensory experience.**
- **Children are given a wide range of open-ended equipment and environments.**
- **Children are able to control, change and modify their environment.**

These are the key principles that underpin effective outdoor play.

Each of the Early Learning Goals can be developed through **Outdoor Play**.

1. Developing Communication and Language

- There is a good range of stimulating first-hand experiences for children and adults to talk about.
- There are places for children to talk with each other.
- Non-fiction books are a stimulus for investigations outdoors.
- Stories are told/read/re-enacted outside.
- Children are encouraged to express their ideas and interests through role play.

2. Developing Physical Development

- The planning of equipment in the outdoor area takes into account all stages of children’s physical development.
- There is a good range of equipment to develop children’s co-ordination and control skills.
- The resources and equipment encourage a variety of ways of using the body.
- The children are presented with challenges that enable them to discover what they are able to do whilst learning about the limitations of their bodies.
- Children are able to experience a variety of different sized materials and use them in a variety of ways.
- Children are encouraged to use their bodies imaginatively e.g. dance, music and movement.
- Staff ensure that boys and girls have equal access to all areas of physical learning

- Children have opportunities to take risks that extend both their physical development and their emotional development.

3. Developing Personal, Social and Emotional Learning

- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to develop co-operation and build relationships.
- Children are encouraged to work together, take turns and help each other.
- Children are encouraged to take responsibility for the resources in the outside area. They are able to set up the areas and tidy resources away.
- The organisation and management of outdoors supports children in initiating and developing their own ideas and interests
- Children are encouraged to develop a sense of wonder about living things and natural phenomena.
- Children develop their understanding and show respect for living things.
- The resources and experiences outside provide opportunities for children to act out their feelings.

4. Developing learning about Literacy

- Reading and writing are incorporated into activities and experiences. They are relevant and meaningful to children's interests and patterns of learning.
- Children are encouraged to use the written word, mark making or write for a range of purposes, e.g. signs, messages, tickets. Using a range of implements and mediums

5. Developing Mathematical Learning

- Children are encouraged to explore patterns, shape, measurement and numbers in the natural and made world. There are resources to support this range of learning.
- The available resources enable children to solve mathematical problems.
- Staff encourage children to develop and use their mathematical language.
- The range of equipment enables children to work on a large scale.
- Children are encouraged to play mathematical games with large equipment.
- Numbers are incorporated into children's play.
- Children are encouraged to write numbers or record mathematical ideas in relevant and appropriate ways.

6. Developing learning about Understanding of the World

- Children are encouraged to observe and express their ideas about similarities and differences in the natural world.
- Children are encouraged to explore the physical environment and are able to solve problems in their own way.
- Changes in the weather are used to stimulate investigative work.
- There is a good range of natural and made materials for children and adults to talk about.
- Children are able to use a range of natural and made materials to design, make and build.
- The outside area is organised so that children are provided with opportunities to play out their life experiences and to develop imaginative play.

- Staff support and develop children's imaginative play related to life experiences.
- Staff ensure that all children have access to a wide range of resources and experiences.

7. Developing Expressive Arts and Design

- Children are encouraged to represent their ideas imaginatively. There are a range of materials so that they can create 2D and 3D images.
- Children are encouraged to explore colour, shape and texture within natural materials.
- Staff plan for music, movement, dance, singing and drama to take place in the outside area.
- Children have the opportunity to experience a large range of textures and different materials.
- Opportunities are provided for children to develop large-scale work.
- Appropriate resources are available to support large-scale mark making.

Effective practice includes consideration of:

- Safety and security
- Range of activities
- Resources
- Storage
- Staffing
- Information to parents

Safety and security

Our outdoor play area is risk assessed annually and monitored daily, using a checklist. Problems are reported daily

This will include checking for:

- Damage to fences & gates.
- Vandalism
- Hazards such as broken glass, mud, discarded items, dog fouling.
- Cracks, holes or other damage to play area surface.
- Broken or raised drain covers.
- Daily checking of any fixed equipment

Arrangements:

- Children will be offered the opportunity for outdoor play daily
- Waterproof clothing is provided
- Supervise children returning indoors to use the toilets
- Have prompt access to the first aid box.

Safety Procedures:

- Staff will have a means of contact with the setting at all times.
- On sunny days, sun hats are provided by the setting for protection.
- Parents are advised to apply sunscreen before children attend the setting or to apply when they arrive (There is a supply of sunscreen in case a parent forgets Nb. Parents need to give permission).

Range of activities including:

- A place to dig and plant
- Planting things to observe. (E.g. Bulbs, annuals, evergreens.)
- Planting things to eat for snack. (E.g. Carrots, lettuce, strawberries.)
- Investigation table. (E.g. Large magnets, large magnifying cubes,
- Mind-stretching bags)
- Feeding the birds
- Observing birds, butterflies, mini-beasts.
- A designated area for messy play.
- Water and water 'painting' with brushes or rollers.
- Chalking (Wet or dry.)
- Large size floor jigsaws. (E.g. Wooden or foam, large books, pens, pads... etc)
- Large construction.
- Obstacle courses made using a variety of equipment
- Role play (E.g. Dressing up as pirates, theme-linked role play- minibeasts, bees..etc)
- Skipping, running, throwing & catching games.
- Ride-on toys
- Experiencing area - sensory garden etc

Resources

- Parachute. Bikes and trikes, scooters, trailers, cars & carts.
- Adjustable cycle helmets.
- Sun hats, gloves, umbrella
- Provision of shade (hut/pergola)
- Fixed equipment (Climbing frame.)
- Climbing blocks, cubes & steps.
- Bench for children to sit and watch.
- Blankets & rugs to sit on.
- Gardening equipment.
- Games painted on ground

Storage

- Outside storage to keep equipment clean & secure. Organised staff easily get resources
- Inside storage for some resources taken outside
- Ensure equipment and resources are rotated to add variety to outside play.

Staffing

- Staff/child ratio to be maintained outdoors and indoors.
- Team to be clear about issues of safety and supervision.
- Adults on outdoor / indoor duty must be qualified members of the team.
- A First aider must be part of the staff supervision team

- Staff who are outdoors should carry a walkie-talkie with them in case of emergency
- Students on placement /visits cannot be left in charge and must work under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member.
- Responsibility for carrying out the daily safety checks lies with the member of staff responsible for that area that day.
- Children must not access the outdoor area until the team know that it is hazard free.
- The team are responsible for setting out the portable equipment and ensuring that it is safely returned to the storage at the end of the session.

Information to parents

- Parents need to know that the children will be using the outdoor play area as an 'outdoor classroom' and across all seasons of the year.
- Co-operation is required to ensure that jackets, hats & footwear are weather appropriate.
- Information at induction meetings, in the handbook, a monthly newsletter and website updates.

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