

Outdoor learning is an integral part of what we do in Early Years as it can offer so many experiences and learning opportunities for our children. We know that for some children the opportunities they have to spend time in the outdoors is limited, and through our knowledge of each individual child we can offer a range of experiences that add to and enhance their cultural capital as they learn and grow with us.



## The seven areas of learning

PD, C&L, PSED, M, L, UW, EAD

Being outdoors supports children's learning holistically. By introducing child centred and open-ended resources the opportunities for children in the outdoor environment can be extended even further. When considering the organisation of your outdoor space, reflect on the areas of learning and look at how they will interlink as children begin to deeply engage with what is provided for them.



### Example - the mud kitchen

Resources: pots, pans, colanders, spoons, jugs, whisks all of varying sizes. Mud, water, leaves, herbs, flowers, all accessible. Waist height and floor height surfaces. Clipboard with paper, hand grip appropriate pencils, recipe cards.

Learning opportunities: hand eye coordination, core and midline strengthening, counting items, measuring, tipping and pouring, using their imagination, problem solving, communicating with others, expressing their needs and ideas, turn taking, mark making, exposure to written language, exploring cause and effect and trial and error.

*Does this cover all seven areas of learning?*

#### Role of the adult

- Introducing new language
- Repeating familiar language
- Intensive interaction
- Playing alongside
- Modelling new skills
- Observing and listening

## The seven senses



Research demonstrates that different sounds, sights, textures, smells and tastes support children with special educational needs to regulate themselves whilst simultaneously promoting brain development and enhancing social skills. We know that there are in fact seven senses that support children with understanding and regulating themselves as well as becoming familiar with the world around them.

### HOW DO WE INCORPORATE THE SEVEN SENSES INTO OUR ENVIRONMENTS?

#### Hearing

Musical instruments, not just a singular music wall but a variety of spaces where sounds can be incorporated through the wind or by physically engaging. Windchimes, wooden glockenspiel, listen to the birds and the wind in the trees!

#### Sight

A variety of items that provide a range of visual stimulation. Mirrors, wildflowers such as primroses, violets and honeysuckle, clear visual contrasts so that items are distinguishable.

#### Touch

A variety of textured material in the environment, wood on planters, sensory footpath, textured tiles stuck around the garden, rocks or a rock wall.

#### Smell/taste

Planters with herbs in in different areas of the garden so that strong scents can be found in different places. lavender, rosemary, parsley, basil, mint, coriander. All of which are safe when consumed as well as smelt!

#### Vestibular

Ways to explore gravity, movement and balance: balance beams, swing, ride along cars/bikes, a safe space to lie down and lift your head, to jump up and down, to roll around.

#### Proprioceptor

Things to climb under, over and around: steps, bridge, tyres, footpaths that wind and turn when followed.

