



**LADYBIRDS**  
**NURSERY**

## *Outdoor Play*

### *Promoting Health and Hygiene*

#### *Policy statement*

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child's development. It can provide 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 Ladybirds Nursery the aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for the children's learning in all areas of the nursery curriculum.

The provision and planning for outdoor play, must reflect the diversity and richness of the experience and developing interests of the children. Some opportunities for learning can only take place outside. The experience of a change in the weather, finding a colony of ants, making an extremely large scale construction with huge cardboard cartons or painting on long strips of paper, all of these motivate children into mental and physical engagement.

The outdoor space is viewed as an essential teaching and learning environment which is linked with the learning that goes on inside, but with even greater status because it allows for children to learn through movement.









## The Outdoor Area

The outdoor area provides for:

-  Challenging and exciting play
-  Safety
-  Grassed, hard and safety surface areas
-  Shady areas
-  Growing/digging areas - garden soil, compost, tubs, vegetable and flower beds, planting tubs, gardening for different seasons, sowing seeds, harvesting vegetables, providing opportunities for environmental science, caring and responsibility
-  Quiet, reflective areas and busy moving play areas
-  Opportunities for large scale experiences

## Planning Outdoor Play

Adults must consider the following points:











-  The specific purpose of 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 and 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 interests. Within the planning there should be some 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 their achievements through observation to record in their individual profiles.

## 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.

In these ways adults are making positive contributions to the children's play and setting up challenging situations for children to experience.

## Learning Opportunities in the Outdoors

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

## **Prime Areas**

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Physical Development

Communication and Language

## **Specific Areas**

Literacy

Mathematics








Understanding The World

Expressive Arts and Design





## Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Prime Area

Successful personal, social and emotional development is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives and gives them the best opportunity for success in all areas of learning.



### Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness

-  Children plant own vegetables/flowers plants and take care of them
-  Take equipment to shed at the end of free play sessions/finding ways to move heavy equipment
-  Listening to birds sing
-  Opportunity to develop an awareness of nature
-  Reflecting/a chance to be thoughtful
-  Space to play, following their own interests, for extended period of time eg making an obstacle course for others to use
-  Freedom to use a wide variety of large equipment eg climbing frame/slide

### Making Relationships

-  Can choose to work/play with a variety of children/adults in the nursery from any group
-  Freedom of movement between outdoor areas for all children at the same time enables children to build a variety of friendships
-  Opportunity to talk about real life experiences in the garden eg gardening at home, trips to the shop with their families
-  Observe events in the immediate area eg sound of a police car, ambulance passing, aeroplanes overhead

### Managing Feelings and Behaviour










-  Share tricycles/scooters with others
-  Take care of growing plants - watering them in dry weather

















## Communication and Language - Prime Area

Children are able to try out a lot of the pre-writing skills in the outdoor area, by building up their gross and then their fine motor skills. Opportunities for large scale drawings are numerous eg chalking on ground and boards, using water and brush and painting on a large scale.

Children can retell familiar stories and take part as one of the characters. They can enrich their vocabulary by listening to others exploring, investigating and interacting with peers and adults.

### Listening and Attention, Speaking and Understanding





















-  Children talking together in co-operative play situations eg on the climbing frames, when making play dens
-  Adult/child conversations where adult may extend or introduce new vocabulary. Children negotiating for turns or objects eg "Can I come on the bike with you"
-  Children recalling particular processes and events they experienced during the session eg "I played with Gemma. We used the hats and bags to be mums"
-  Children listening to and solving problems with language and support as necessary eg "I'll get the sand timer to have a go on the bike"
-  Inviting others to play collaborative games eg "Let's play Goldilocks together"
-  Describing particular objects or natural phenomena eg "It's soft, it's crawling quickly to me"
-  Talking about activities they are engaged in eg water, sound, wheeled toys and using appropriate vocabulary
-  In all practical activities the adult needs to give children the time and space to describe what they are doing and what is happening and to use opportunities for recalling, questioning, prediction, estimating and discussing cause and effect
-  Children using non-verbal communication, particularly body gestures, facial expressions and glancing at things in order to communicate and respond to events and other people

-  Listening to natural and man made sounds eg thunder, chime bars
-  Listening to instructions, conversations and explanations
-  Listening to thyme, poems, songs and chants
-  Looking at books eg sitting on the cushions or a rug with the book box 'reading' to a friend
-  Environmental print eg Garden centre banner, Car wash sign
-  Enjoy rhyming and rhythmic activities eg traditional rhymes and simple poems
-  Chalk or pencil marks
-  Following road systems eg pathway and road signs
-  Table top and construction toys eg large mosaics
-  Making role play signs and displaying these around the garden eg Café
-  Imitating adults by jotting down notes eg using a note book and pencil to scribble and draw
-  At the garden centre, shop or noting down the orders in the café
-  With a clipboard and pencil, moving around the nursery garden
-  On the large blackboard, using both fine and chunky chalks
-  On the ground using giant chalks
-  Chalking up scores on the blackboard

## Physical Development - Prime Area

Young children's development is inseparable from all other aspects of development because they learn from being active and interactive. Daily opportunities are planned to develop children's gross and fine motor skills.

### Moving and Handling

-  Pulling/pushing wooden trucks in fire fighters game
-  Carrying house equipment to set up in a different location
-  Playing musical instruments in a moving band
-  Riding scooters and tricycles, prams and pushchairs
-  Large scale painting and drawing
-  Obstacle course constructed with planks, spools, tyres, wooden steps and boxes
-  Large fixed climbing frame
-  Small wooden climbing frame and attachments
-  Movement/dance
-  Running around the garden area
-  Building and climbing inside dens, hidey holes
-  Aiming beanbags into buckets and large ball into basketball net
-  Bat and ball games, throwing and catching balls, kicking balls into football net
-  Range of gardening tools
-  Painting with water and paint, large chalk
-  Skittles
-  Clay, cooking tools, joining and cutting tools
-  Washing hands independently after gardening
-  Put on wellingtons to play in sand pit or work in the garden
-  Change wet clothes if necessary



## Health and Self-Care

Adults communicating and explaining, describing and feeding back to children as they access health promoting activities in the nursery environment



Healthy Eating café



Vegetable gardening



Noticing breathlessness after exercise









Noticing tiredness in body, legs and arms, feet and fingers after exercise

## Mathematical Development - Specific Area

A carefully planned outdoor provision offers children opportunities to experience mathematical activities which extend/contrast with those provided indoors and so extend the scope of the curriculum.














Children should have opportunities to experience:

-  Mathematical language and measurement
-  Sorting and matching number
-  Classifying and sequencing
-  Positional awareness
-  Directions problem solving
-  Time
















Mathematical language should be encouraged when appropriate. Opportunities could include discussion, questioning, prediction, estimating through working with materials and observation.

Songs, rhymes and playground games are a rich context in which to build a child's language and vocabulary in addition to those areas of development.

## Numbers

-  Counting buckets in the sand
-  Throwing bean bags into a bucket
-  Planting seeds
-  Ordering first, second and third with cars, skittles tubes in the sand etc
-  Cooking the sand with bun tins
-  Picnics
-  Laying the table in the house
-  Tallying when skittles knocked over
-  Reading numbers on objects
-  Writing numbers on chalkboards, on the path etc
-  How many more? When laying the table
-  Tidy up time, solving problems, are they all there?
-  Lining up cars, more than less than

## Shape, Space and Measure









-  Use of indoor table top activities
-  House play
-  Block play
-  Sorting seeds into colours shape and size
-  Making collections of natural objects
-  Obstacle course (hoops, tunnels, boxes, barrels, planks and logs)  
giving opportunities for positional language eg high/low, under/over,  
through, along, upside-down, in/out
-  Assorted puzzles
-  Volume and capacity in sandpit and water tray
-  Lengths of ribbon on windy day
-  Weaving
-  Using tape measures
-  Sand timers
-  Changes to garden
-  Seasonal change
-  Use of speed on wheeled toys

## Understanding The World - Specific Area







In this area children are given opportunities to make sense of their world. The outdoor area provides many opportunities for real experiences including exploring the weather, the natural environment and building on a large scale.

Children should have opportunities to develop the following knowledge/skills:




### The World

-  Noticing different weather conditions and the impact of the weather on them
-  Noticing plants in the garden/taking care of them
-  Planting seeds and bulbs
-  Exploring mini-beasts
-  Identifying objects that float and sink
-  Exploring different speeds cars go down a ramp
-  Noticing changes in the garden through the seasons
-  Talking about when different things happen in the garden

### Technology















-  A variety of constructional toys
-  Large blocks
-  A variety of large equipment
-  Wet sand
-  Wood bench and tools
-  Den making equipment

### People and Communities










-  Talk about different parts of nursery, eg outdoors area, steps, front and back
-  Notice feature of the local area when walking to the park
-  Role play resources from a variety of cultures

## Creative Development - Specific Area








### Exploring and Using Media

-  Looking at colours of leaves and flowers
-  Building obstacles courses, towers, bridges, sculptures
-  Describing texture of grass, wood, soil, worms, snails, snow, ice
-  Mixing sand and water
-  Playing with cardboard boxes
-  Large scale painting, weaving, chalking
-  Playing a variety of musical instruments
-  Singing songs inspired by the things outdoors like worms, snails, the weather, plants, trees
-  Playing ring games
-  Making up dances to music made by children on the instruments
-  Marching and being a band
-  Noticing weather
-  Listening to birds, sirens
-  Making maps

### Being Imaginative

-  Large scale painting in 2D and 3D
-  Drawing with large chalk/pastels
-  Mark making with large paint brushes and rollers
-  Pattern making with found objects
-  Designing and building dens, sand castles, sculptures, collages, weaving
-  Obstacle course, props for role play (boats, rockets, helicopters)
-  Large block building
-  Dens
-  Dressing up

## Safety in the Outdoor Area

-  When setting out the equipment each day and during sessions, staff must look out for safety and remove any objects such as cans, bottles etc which may have been thrown over the fence by passers-by.
-  Before children go outside staff must check the back gate is closed.
-  Staff on duty must always be aware of the safety of the children in their care, be vigilant at all times and never leave the play area for any reason unless it is an emergency.
-  Ratios must be maintained at all times while outdoors
-  It is important for staff to move around the area constantly so that all the areas are adequately supervised. Each person must position him/herself in separate areas so that no area is left unsupervised.
-  All equipment must be stored away after each session, not just at the end of the day. Each group is responsible for tidying the garden after they have used it, it must be tidy ready for the next group.
-  If a child is injured he/she should be taken indoors for treatment as quickly as possible, staff should

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## Date Reviewed

The policy will be reviewed sooner than the review date should any new information be obtained.