

Section One – Outdoor nature area.



(Source: Lauren Pope, Samsung S23, YGG, Tirdeunaw, 2024).

Section Two:

Fortunately, at our setting we are able to offer this natural environment for the early years children whilst providing them with hands on and sensory experiences. The children have had many opportunities to learn and engage with nature and the environment. Children often have good use of this area in which they like to dig the mud and lather it over the mud kitchen this is a favourite, whilst they are doing this they are laughing and communicating with their peers on the consistency of the mud on how it feels on their hands, the texture if it is dry or wet when it is wet it lathers better over the mud kitchen when it is dry it crumbles and they imagine they are baking a cake. Whilst listening and observing it is wonderful to hear their perspectives on how they can use nature to create a whole new world with their

peers, creating a magical kingdom making potions in the mud kitchen to destroy monsters and so forth. Discussing the consistency of the position is too thick or too watery and getting excited when they get the right consistency. This being play and no correct consistency the children themselves knew what consistency they wanted for that position and achieved themselves. Therefore, problem solving within their group and learning about various consistencies through imaginative play. Another group whilst out in the area that day that caught my attention were a smaller group of three children who were digging with a bucket, child A was holding the bucket whilst child B and child C were digging and filling the bucket ready for child A to carry the bucket child A testing the bucket regularly and as the bucket became progressively heavier child A told the other children to stop filling the bucket. Child A carried the quarter filled bucket across to the mud kitchen and emptied it into the bowl, the challenge was then set. Child B and Child C wanted a turn but wanted to see if they could fill the bucket further in which it would be heavier so that they could prove they were stronger in carrying the bucket over to the mud kitchen and so they went on to experiment this between themselves. Child A and Child C filled the bucket this time and Child B was to carry the bucket and so Child B carried this time the half-filled bucket over to the mud kitchen, as the children cheered. There are many opportunities for activities within this area these include maths activities such as shape hunts where the objective is to explore shapes within nature. Ask the children to find shapes or loose parts, natural objects that resemble basic shapes, such as, circles, squares, or triangles. Discuss with the children the objects and loose parts that they find and create tasks for them like sorting them into shapes or sizes. Whilst on the subject of measuring, discuss what other objects or loose parts can be measured in the natural environment such as sticks and footprints, let them make footprints and measure them with sticks or vice versa lay the sticks down and count how many steps the sticks are. Another task children can discuss is shadows on a sunny day children can either use their own bodies or the loose parts they find daily around this area and see how the angle of the sun measures in different ways to make shapes in shadows how long they are from one angle, how short they are from another angle. They can see how they change from one child to another and from one loose part to another.

Name of activity:	Outdoor Nature play area risk assessment.
Description of activity	Free play, children using initiative and imagination and engage with nature to explore various objects and lose parts. The Leader or Teacher of each session at this site is responsible for the control measures. This risk assessment must be updated every three months. Should and accident or incident occur, it should be promptly reported, and the risk assessment adjusted accordingly.
Appropriate for which ages and abilities	Ages three to seven.
Equipment or resources needed	Staff must always have access to Walkie Talkie to contact the office staff for any need of emergency or for the contact of emergency services if the risk of this service does arise.
Any special adaptations for different needs	Suitable clothing and footwear must be worn at all times.

Risk	Level of risk with no control measures (H,M,L)	Control Measures / Actions	Level of risk Following control measures / actions.
Slippery mud or logs , uneven ground – sprains or breaks.	High	Encourage children to walk slowly, not to walk on logs when wet, and to wear appropriate clothing and footwear on days we attend this area.	Low.
Splinters from mud kitchen, fencing, logs, wood.	Low.	Supervise children in this area. Monitor this area often and fix any issues or sharp bits promptly.	Low.
Use of garden tools.	Medium.	Always supervise children whilst they are using the garden tools, shovels, rabbit shovels, digging forks, wheels barrows, rake. Check the equipment regularly also for ware and tare.	Low.

Section Four.

Nature offers a range of experiences for young minds to wonder and explore the outdoors whilst they learn. It offers a various of sensory of experiences for children to engage with the environment. The role of the adult in outdoor learning varies as practitioners and educators it is important that one must observe children and allow them to play freely but equally as important that one must support and encourage children to try new things to educate them and set goals and tasks for children to achieve so that they learn. Waite (2011) says providing children with real objects and tools outdoors and allowing them to use them in the correct environment such as the nature area above where they are able to dig and shovel and fill the wheelbarrows without being shown by an adult provides children with firsthand experience of real-life scenarios. Shawket (2016) discuss the theory of Montessori and how children outdoors have the freedom to play freely and engage with nature whilst to understand the environment around them. Children learn from nature the cycles of life in nature of how flowers grow, how insects' life in the wild and how some animals live in the wild and survive through different seasons. As practitioners and educators providing bird feeders or small areas where children can check each day or each week to provide care for birds or small animals such as hedgehogs could be a way of teaching them to care for living creatures. Bergan, *et al* (2023) discuss the role of the adult as an attentive role, it is a role in which one must provide interesting experience for curiosity, adventure and challenge. Allow them to play freely and problem solve but also set small tasks or plant small questions in their minds in which they may wonder what or how could they do things differently.

Bergan, V. *et al.* (2023) 'The teacher's role for engagement in foraging and gardening activities in kindergarten', *Environmental Education Research*, 30(1), pp. 68–82. doi: 10.1080/13504622.2023.2181271.

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