



AUDIT OF THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:

It is important that all children get frequent and regular opportunities to explore and learn in the outdoor environment and this should not be seen as an optional extra. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum, places strong emphasis on the importance and value of daily outdoor experiences for children's learning and development.

"The best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky"

Margaret McMillan (c1925) Nursery Schools and the Pre-school Child NSA Publication

Using your space effectively is the key to optimising children's experiences; the audit below will support you to look at your environment and identify areas that you could change and modify to enhance the children's learning. Some areas may be out of your control due to the nursery building layout but the audit can be used to help you make changes.

Think about the key recommendations from the EYFS.

The audit will cover the following areas:

Access to the outdoor area
Utilising Space
Outdoor Equipment/ Resources
Environment
High Energy Access
Staff/ Role modelling/Planning/Observation
Parent Partnership

Access to the outdoor area:				
	Good/ yes	Some Provision /occasionally	No Provision/ No	Evidence/ Actions/ Comments
Does each age group have access to the outdoor area daily?				
Is there free flow between the indoors and outdoors?				
Is the outdoor space accessed in all weathers?				

Utilising space:				
	Good/ yes	Some Provision /occasionally	No Provision/ No	Evidence/ Actions/ Comments
Is the outdoor area zoned to create a variety of areas? (further information below)				
Does the outdoor area offer shelter/ shade when needed?				
Does the outdoor space offer places to hide and be quiet?				
Does the outdoor space offer areas to dig/plant and encourage wildlife?				

	Good/ yes	Some Provision /occasionally	No Provision/ No	Evidence/ Actions/ Comments
Does the outdoor environment support the children to use their senses?				
Do you as a setting take children to local spaces so they can engage in gross motor activities daily if you don't have a large space at your setting?				

Outdoor equipment/ resources:				
	Good/ yes	Some Provision /occasionally	No Provision/ No	Evidence/ Actions/ Comments
Is the outdoor clothing provided by the nursery, so that all can participate?				
Is the small and large equipment accessible to the children?				
Are your outdoor resources moveable to allow for change, challenge and new experiences?				
Does the equipment/ areas provided stimulate skills on different levels. (E.g. Tricycles with and without pedals etc.)				

Staff/ Role modelling/Planning/Observation:

	Good/ yes	Some Provision /occasionally	No Provision/ No	Evidence/ Actions/ Comments
Do you provide a mixture of planned and unplanned learning experiences outdoors?				
Do staff talk to the children about the skills that they are learning whilst undertaking activities? Are they reviewing their progress?				
Do senior staff observe staff involvement in the outdoor spaces on a regular basis and in all weathers?				

	Good/ yes	Some Provision /occasionally	No Provision/ No	Evidence/ Actions/ Comments
Do staff join in with activities and reflect with the children on their activity?				
Do staff use observations to plan and develop the outdoor area and children's development?				
Who has responsibility for the outdoors environment? Are they given time to develop and enhance the area in all weathers?				

Parent Partnership:				
	Good/ yes	Some Provision /occasionally	No Provision/ No	Evidence/ Actions/ Comments
Do parents have the opportunity to share their child's outdoor activities/ movement with the setting?				

Suggested Zones

Learning Bay / Zone	Main Startwell Characters Involved						
	Suzy Startwell	180 Katie	2 Snacks Max	Sammy Skills	Fay 5aDay	Active Azra	Micky Me Size
Large-Movement Area	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Small-Equipment Area	✓			✓		✓	
Climbing/ Balancing/ Different Gradients Area				✓		✓	
Mud Kitchen	✓			✓	✓		✓
Sensory/Messy Play	✓		Depends on activity	✓	Depends on activity	Depends on activity	
Food Growing/ Gardening/ Digging	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Snack Area	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Sand and Water Areas	✓			✓		✓	
Imaginative Area (Open ended play / exploration)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creative Area (Art/ Design / Music)				✓	Depends on activity	✓	
Large-Scale Construction Area	✓			✓		✓	
Quiet Area	✓			✓			

Learning Bay / Zone	Suzy Startwell	180 Katie	2 Snacks Max	Sammy Skills	Fay 5aDay	Active Azra	Micky Me Size
Wheeled-Vehicle Area				✓		✓	
Baby / Young Children's Area	✓			✓		✓	

What zones do you use?

(tick the zones below)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Large Movement Area (running, dance, high energy, gross motor) | ☐ Sand and Water areas |
| ☐ Small Equipment Area | ☐ Imaginative play area (open ended play, exploration) |
| ☐ Areas for climbing, balancing, different gradients | ☐ Creative Area, Musical area |
| ☐ Mud kitchen | ☐ Large building and construction areas |
| ☐ Sensory / messy play | ☐ Quiet/ hiding areas |
| ☐ Food growing/ planting areas | ☐ Ride on area for wheeled toys |
| ☐ Snack Area | ☐ Area for developing manipulation skills (using tools to control objects – bats, sticks, feet etc) |
| ☐ Baby/ young children's areas | |

More information around zones in your outdoor space will be sent over the next term.

Opportunities in the Outdoor Environment

Think about the activities below do you provide these opportunities outdoors on a regular basis? Rate yourself using ABC.

	A – Good	B – Adequate/ Improve	C – No Provision – needs extra work	Comments/ Actions:
Jumping on and over				
going through obstacles				
Snack Time				
Balancing				
Kicking, throwing and aiming - opportunities to use equipment				
Getting into and under				
Pushing, pulling and riding				
Sliding				
Swinging				
Climbing				
Sand and water play				
Opportunities to mix, stir etc.				
Investigation play				
Build, haul and construct with				
Opportunities to dig, plant and grow?				
Drawing and painting				
Speaking and listening				
Reading				
Writing				
Maths				

The lists could be endless and there are more that you probably do that are not on our lists, use this as a tool to develop your outside and review how the children are using certain areas – do they need a change? If you have any other queries comments or need more support in this area contact your Startwell lead.