



Outdoor Classroom Day

21st May 2020



On Thursday 21st May, we were due to celebrate Outdoor Classroom Day at school. The day marks an opportunity to show how learning outside of the classroom engages and excites children in so many different and inspiring ways.

Outdoor Classroom Day is a global movement to encourage and celebrate outdoor play and learning at school.

In 2019, over 3 million children throughout the world were involved in International Outdoor Classroom Day.

On the actual day, teachers plan opportunities for the children to be involved in a special day outdoors. Due to the current situation, Outdoor Classroom Day will now be organised in a different way this year, under the title of 'Playful Nature.'

As this week also marks 'Mental Health Awareness' week, where we focus on ways in which we can promote positive mental health, it is important to remember that connecting to nature can help to restore our well being. For children, this connection is made very positively through play. We feel that 'Playful Nature' offers an opportunity to become immersed in outdoor learning whilst also promoting positive mental health.

We would like to invite children and parents to mark the day in any special way that you can, giving you an opportunity to strengthen your child's connection to the natural world. **Please share your creative ideas on our twitter page to show how you got involved to celebrate outdoor learning. We can't wait to see your ideas!**

There are many ways you could get involved in 'Playful Nature' and encourage a connection between your child and nature. Here are some ideas:



Write about or draw an element of nature



Create a nature den—add plants, use nature colours and add nature sounds



Spot any insects/ animals and imitate them



Play a nature based game of 'I Spy'



Spot clouds and make a journal of all of the things you think you see in them



Make a nature scrapbook—record things you see, hear, feel



Sing nature songs



Decorate Nature Stones



Make 'nature faces'

Children have a fascination with nature so think about resources that allow children to explore the four elements in their play:

- **Earth** – mud pies, sand, clay or digging
- **Air** – kites, bubbles, balloons or flags
- **Fire** – candle decorating, toasting marshmallows or campfire

Cooking

- **Water** – hosepipes, buckets, sponges or watering cans.

Mud Pies





Den Building



Top tips for dens at home

Making a den – and playing in it – is a favourite activity for children of all ages. Dens are really easy to make with things you have at home.

Why are dens so much fun?

Children enjoy small spaces they can hide in and where they can create their own little worlds. Dens can be a lovely place for you to spend some quality precious time with your child. They can be helpful places for your child to relax and have a bit of downtime.

Things your child can use to make a den

Your child can make a den with all sorts of things:

- chairs and tables with sheets or blankets draped over them
- cardboard boxes (sometimes supermarkets and other shops will let you take them away)
- clothes driers, pegs and sheets
- washing lines, pegs, tablecloths and shower curtains
- bamboo canes, brooms and brushes with long handles (to make a frame)
- golf umbrellas and cushions.

Your child might need your help finding things they can use to make a den. They might want you to help them make it but try and let them do as much as possible themselves – they will learn more that way.

Things your child can add to their den

Here are some things that can be used to decorate or add to a den:

- piles of cushions and pillows
- fairy lights
- flags, tea towels and scarves
- shoe boxes
- a picnic table and camping stools
- things from the kitchen like pots and pans
- teddy bears, other soft toys and dolls.

Things your child can do in their den

Your child will probably have plenty of ideas for playing in their den. In your child's imagination it could be almost anything – for example:

- a shop
- a magic cave
- a rabbit's burrow

Making the den might be what interests your child the most. Don't worry if they lose interest after they've made it, or if they take it apart.