



**Umbrella Family
and Child Centres
of Hamilton**



OUTDOOR PEDAGOGY

OUR GOALS FOR TODAY:

What Is Outdoor Play?

The Benefits Of Outdoor Pedagogy

The Importance Of Physical Play

Role Of An Educator

Designing Your Outdoor Play Spaces

Risk Play

Nature Materials And Provocations

Sit Spots

What Can Parents Do?

Prize Draw



A photograph of a forest stream flowing over large, dark rocks. The water is clear and reflects the surrounding greenery. In the background, a wooden viewing platform with railings is built on a rocky outcrop, overlooking the stream. The forest is dense with tall trees and lush foliage, with sunlight filtering through the canopy.

THINKING ABOUT YOUR OWN CHILDHOOD

- Think about your favourite place to be as a child, where you most loved to play outdoors.
- What was it about this place that you loved?

WHAT IS OUTDOOR PEDAGOGY?

- What is Outdoor Pedagogy?
- The outdoors gives children unique opportunities:
 - ✓ Experience with all their senses
 - ✓ Observations
 - ✓ Art, science, mathematics, language
 - ✓ Developing social skills
 - ✓ Building and constructing with sand, water and mud



THE BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR PEDAGOGY

- How Does Learning Happen?
- Developing engaging outdoor environments can support children in creating meaningful play experiences.





PHYSICAL HEALTH:

- Outdoor activities promote physical exercise, helping children develop gross motor skills and overall fitness.



EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING:

- Outdoor learning can reduce stress and anxiety levels in children.
- Connection with nature promotes emotional resilience and mental well-being



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT:

- Outdoor Environments
- Problem Solving
- Creativity and Imagination
- Spatial Awareness
- Observations Skills
- Multisensory Stimulation



SOCIAL SKILLS:

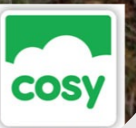
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Communication Skills
- Conflict Resolution
- Building friendships



Most of what
children need
to learn during
their early childhood
years cannot be
taught: it's
discovered through
play

Ruth Wilson

www.cosydirect.com



**WHAT ACTIVITIES OR FEATURES DO YOU
ENJOY MOST IN YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE?**

<https://www.menti.com/almq1hdx5dxk>



THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL PLAY

- Difference between outdoor play and physical play
- How Does Learning Happen?
- Time and tools to be physically active
- Educators as co-learners





EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUTDOOR LEARNING

- Opportunities for play-based learning experiences
- Children's cognitive and physical development
- Natural outdoor environments



MOVEMENT PLAY

- More space and freedom for large movement play.
- Physical development
- Unstructured play as well as adult-led activities.
- Modelling

**Children are 10 times
more active when
they are outdoors
rather than indoors
in child care settings.**

Tucker and Vanderloo, 2019





ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

- Natural elements
- Fosters a sense of environmental stewardship and respect for nature.
- Children's hands-on activities in the outdoors
- Children can have a visible impact on the environment.

"Given the degree of research indicating how critical children's interactions with the natural world are, it is the responsibility of early childhood educators to step in and advocate for children's rights to experience organic play spaces."

(Nedovic & Morrissey, 2013, p. 11)



Rainbow Walk



Rock weaving





Color Matching Walk



Texture Walk

THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

Educators play a crucial role in engaging children in outdoor spaces, fostering their development and providing valuable learning experiences. Here are several ways educators can actively participate in and enhance children's engagement in outdoor environments:



UNSTRUCTURED FREE PLAY:

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

[https://www.instagram.com/reel/
C1DcocAP10N/?utm_source=ig_w
eb_copy_link](https://www.instagram.com/reel/C1DcocAP10N/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)





Children learn and develop by doing things, by playing and by having hands-on meaningful experiences.

The best classroom
and the richest cupboard
is roofed only by the sky.

MARGARET MCMILLAN



REFLECT: ON THE OUTDOOR SPACE:

- As you observe children outdoors, do you notice differences in their attention and learning?
- What are their interests and are they represented?
- How do the children experience the different spaces or areas that have been designed outdoors?
- How does the outdoor environment support each child's development?
- In what ways do I create areas of inquiry, curiosity, challenge, wonderment, and movement?
- What ideas are emerging?
- How can I support their ideas with provocations?



DESIGNING OUTDOOR PLAY SPACES:

- Be realistic
- Write it down.
- Set-up the playground to reflect all learning areas
- Seek out the perspective and voice of the children



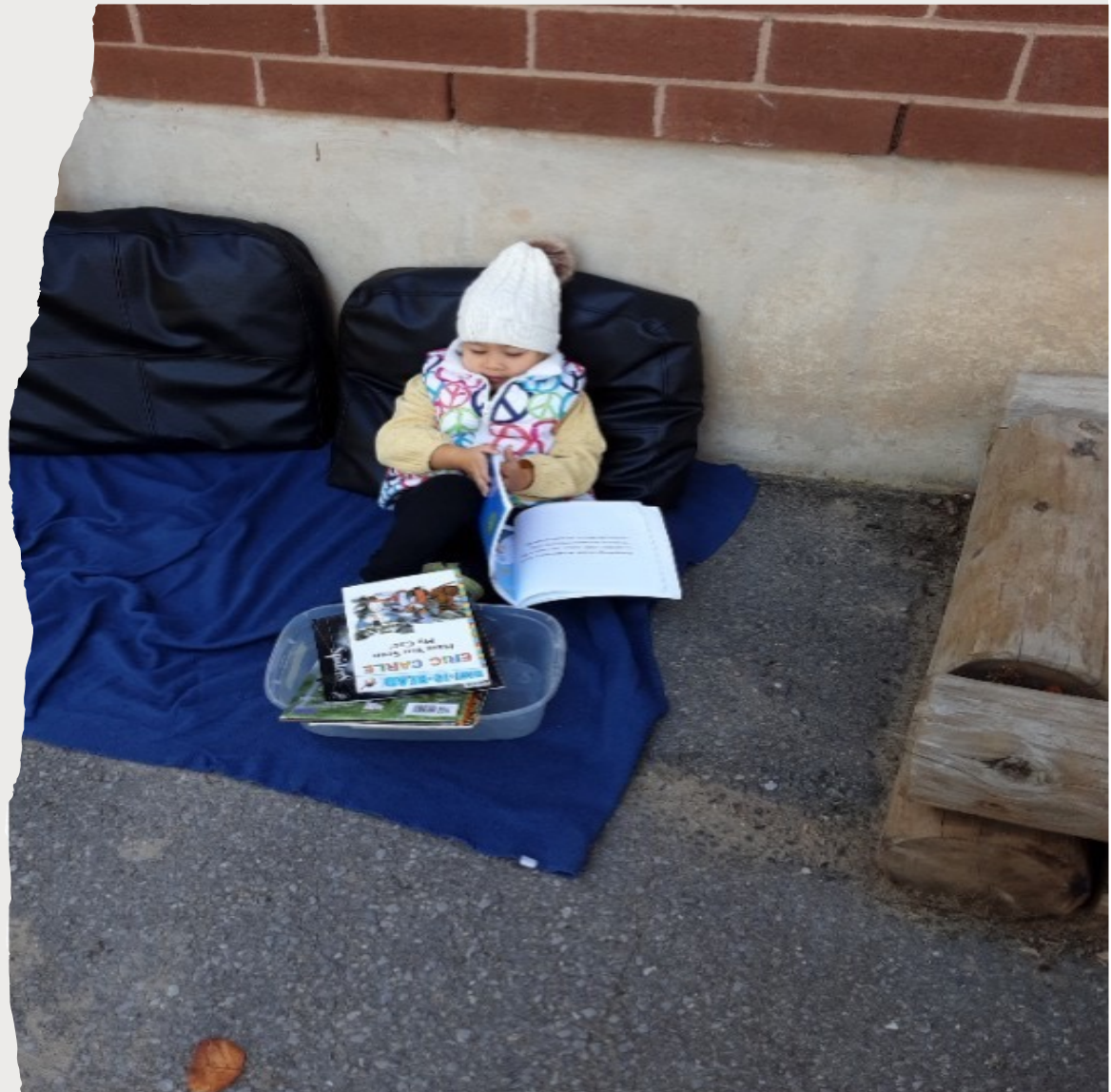
OUTDOOR LEARNING AREAS

- Children's play and activities
- Promote engagement outdoors.
- Break from being indoors
- Safe and organized
- Include provocations, activities as well as free time.



QUIET AREA:

Set up a cozy reading corner with comfortable cushions, blankets, and outdoor-friendly bean bags. Provide a small bookshelf with a variety of age-appropriate books for kids to enjoy in a quiet atmosphere.



LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Creating a language and literacy-rich outdoor environment for children is essential for their holistic development. Outdoor settings provide diverse opportunities for language exploration, communication, and literacy development.



ART AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Bringing art and creative expression outdoors for children not only enhances their artistic abilities but also provides a holistic and sensory-rich learning experience.





MANIPULATIVE AREA

When we talk about manipulation in the context of activities for children, it typically refers to activities that involve using hands and fingers for fine motor skill development.

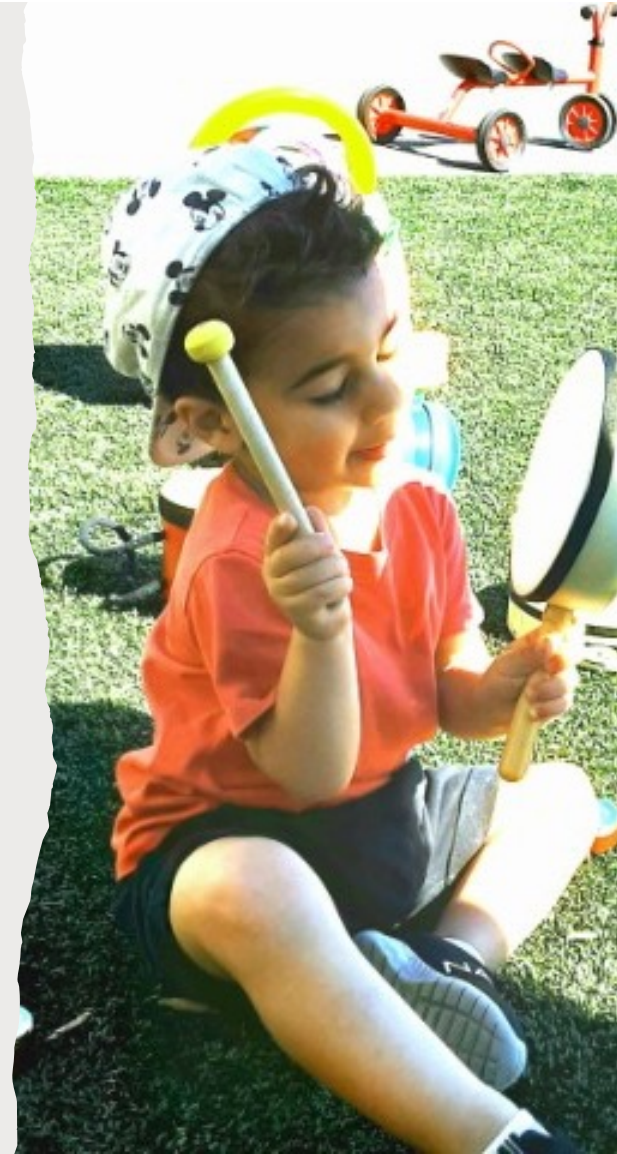


BLOCKS AND CONSTRUCTION

Outdoor block play and construction activities for children offer a fantastic opportunity for creativity, problem-solving, and physical development

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Outdoor music and movement activities for children provide a fun and engaging way for them to explore rhythm, coordination, and creative expression.



SCIENCE AND NATURE

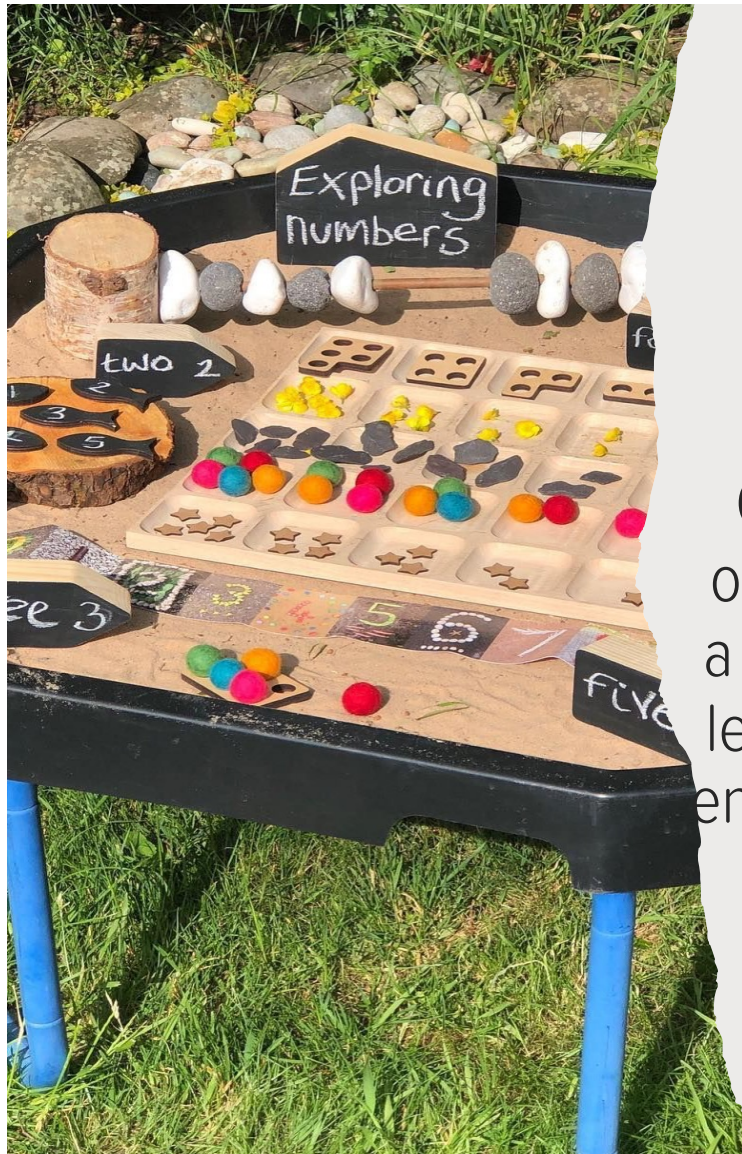


Outdoor science and nature activities for children provide hands-on experiences that foster curiosity, exploration, and a deeper understanding of the natural world.

SENSORY AREA:

Creating a sensory area outdoors for children provides a rich and stimulating environment that engages their senses and promotes sensory exploration.





MATH AREA:

Creating a math area outdoors for children is a fantastic way to make learning math concepts enjoyable and hands-on.



DRAMATIC PLAY

Designing a dramatic play area outdoors for children encourages imaginative play, creativity, and social interaction.

Educators to encourage and expand on children's ideas and ask open-ended questions.



WHAT'S THE MOST ADVENTUROUS THING YOU'VE DONE IN YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE?

<https://www.menti.com/almq1hdx5dxk>



OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE NEED FOR PLAY

- Imagination
- Developmental skills
- Increase their problem-solving abilities

Research shows us that many of the fundamental tasks that children must achieve, such as exploring, risk-taking, fine and gross motor development and the absorption of vast amounts of basic knowledge, can be most effectively learned through outdoor play.

EDGAR L. & RHETA A. BERKLEY





APPROPRIATE RISK PLAY

- Adventure and challenge in the process.
- They face the risk of mistakes
- Children are given a chance to engage freely in risky play
- Children learn about themselves and their environment.
- Confident children



‘POWER OF PLAY FROM A CHILD’S PERSPECTIVE’.



NATURE AND NATURAL MATERIALS

- Experience of hands-on involvement with natural materials.
- When children are free to follow their own interests
- Open-ended materials
- Open-ended opportunities



**List some ways you can foster
children's curiosity about
nature.**

<https://www.menti.com/almq1hdx5dxk>



NATURE AREA:


Creating a nature area outdoors for children provides a space for exploration, connection with the natural world, and learning about the environment.



NATURAL LOOSE PARTS

A loose parts play area outdoors for children provides an open-ended and creative space where kids can use various materials to build, manipulate, and imagine.



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding several chestnuts. The chestnuts are brown and smooth, with some showing their characteristic pointed shape. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and brown, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The entire image is framed by a white border, which is itself set against a larger brown background.

Direct contact with nature
has direct benefits for children's
physical, mental and emotional health.

Free play opportunities
in natural settings
offer possibilities for
restoration, and
hence, well-being.

WAYS TO MAKE YOUR PLAYGROUND MORE NATURAL

Water



Trees



Rocks



Sand



Grass



Gardens



WHAT LEARNING IS VISIBLE?

<https://www.menti.com/almq1hdx5dxk>



The Outdoor Classroom

Provocations & Beautiful Materials


If our beautiful outdoor space, abounding with natural light and fresh air, is a great place for traditional “outdoor play”, could we enhance and broaden the children’s play by also offering the opportunity to engage in the play we might think of as “indoor play”?



SETTING UP PROVOCATIONS

Outdoor provocations for children involve intentionally setting up environments or scenarios that inspire curiosity, exploration, and engagement. These provocations are designed to stimulate creativity, critical thinking, and imaginative play.



A photograph of a young child from behind, wearing a blue textured sweater and a grey shirt, walking away on a dirt path. The path is surrounded by green grass and trees in the background. The image has a white, torn-edge effect on the left side.

Children cannot
bounce off the walls
if we take away the walls.

ERIN KENNY

WHAT IS A SIT SPOT?


- It's exactly as simple as it sounds like a spot where you sit!
- A sit spot is a place away from distractions where kids can sit, be quiet, and observe nature. (High-traffic and noisy spots aren't ideal.)
- It's a favorite place outdoors that can be re-visited across the seasons.



HOW DO YOU CHOOSE A SIT SPOT?

- A sit spot should be:
- child-selected
- free of outside distractions
- safe
- (relatively) comfortable
- where nature is present



A child is seen from the back, wearing a vibrant jacket with a blue, green, and white checkered pattern and a grey knit beanie. The child is standing in a natural, outdoor environment with a blurred background of trees and foliage. The lighting suggests a bright, sunny day.

Time outdoors in nature
offers endless opportunities
to learn and grow,
and supports the development
of the whole child —
cognitive, physical, social
and emotional, creative.

ERIN SAUNDERS

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- Understanding the benefits that outdoor play
- Being outside in all weathers
- Encourage clothing to get dirty in



**There's
no such
thing as
bad weather,
only bad
clothes.**

Unknown
quotestoenjoy.com







Our playground is not just a playground ...

It is a garden.

It is a stage.

It is a building space.

It is a giant chalk easel.

It is a painting studio.

It is a design room.

It is fresh air and open space.

It is a classroom without roof.

It is anything we can imagine it to be and every intriguing material we fill it with.

PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE

- Certificate of Outdoor Pedagogy Completion
- Handouts
 - Nature Colour Wheel
 - Chalk Ideas for your outdoor space
 - Loose Parts Mats for outdoor area
 - 70 Outdoor educational ideas
 - Sit Spots activities
 - Outdoor provocation ideas
 - Learning Area activities
- Survey for staff

A collection of various household and garden items laid out on a white, wrinkled fabric surface. The items include two black plastic shovels with silver handles, two bags of mulch (one labeled 'Mulch' and the other 'Mulch & Compost'), a Betty Crocker toaster oven, a red and white multi-compartment tray, a package of bamboo chopsticks, a bag of wood chips, a bag of glass pebbles, and several pairs of gloves (one pair is red and white, another is green and white). There are also some small packets of seeds or soil, a black plastic bucket, and a small black plastic container.

WINNER