



Outdoor Play

March 2024

At YMCA Childcare we are committed to the importance of daily outdoor play and the physical development of all children regardless of their age and stage of development. We ensure our outdoor area is inclusive, and make reasonable adjustments where required in line with the Equality Act 2010. We provide outdoor play in all weathers, and where possible children having free access to the outdoors allowing them the freedom to play indoors or outdoors.

We recognise the vital role that learning outdoors has on children's learning and development, as well as the importance of regular access to outdoor play in order to keep fit and healthy, develop their large and fine motor skills, experience learning in a natural environment and access sunlight in order to absorb vitamin D more effectively. We also refer to The Chief Medical Office guidance on physical activity.¹

The outdoor areas, both within the childcare grounds and in the local community have a wealth of experiences and resources which help children learn and develop in a variety of ways, including independence, exploration and investigative skills, risk taking and self-esteem, all of which support children to develop skills now and for the future.

We take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children through risk assessments, whilst also balancing the benefits of learning through providing an element of 'risky play'. This type of play allows children to explore and find their own boundaries in a safe environment with supportive and skilled practitioners. Staff are informed of the importance of safety procedures and are trained appropriately to ensure these procedures are followed effectively.

We ensure outdoor play is adequately supervised, and we have robust safety checks in place, including regular headcounts.

We obtain parental permission before any child leaves the childcare setting during the day. This includes short outings into the local community. There is more information in the outings policy.

We plan all outdoor play opportunities and outings to complement the early years curriculum, this includes providing children with purposeful activities and quality resources that support and follow children's individual children's interests and the

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-physical-activity-guidelines





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seven areas of learning and development. There is a balance of both adult-led and child-initiated opportunities to enable children to learn and practice new skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Where activities take place away from the setting (e.g. in the local wood) then a nursery mobile phone and first aid kit will be taken to ensure the safety of children at all times. A trained paediatric first aider will be present when away from the main setting.

Objectives

- To enjoy outdoor activity throughout the seasons.
- To investigate and experiment with a variety of natural resources.
- To make discoveries using senses.
- To use language to describe, explain, predict, ask questions and develop ideas.
- To develop an appreciation of natural beauty and sense of wonder.
- To care for personal safety.
- To care for the environment of the garden and create an awareness of wider issues.
- To provide meaningful activities in the outdoor environment.
- To encourage children to contribute to the maintenance of the garden (planting, watering, mulching, weeding, composting).
- To respect the need for tranquillity, solitude and spiritually.
- To model caring for the living things that share the outdoor environment.

This policy was reviewed on:	Reviewed by:	Date for next review:
26.02.2024	K. Streater	26.02.2025
Signed on behalf of YMCA Trinity Group:	A.Spence	

