

Pixies Policy for Outdoor Play

This document is produced for staff working with the children at Pixies, and is a point of reference for families and others visiting the setting. Within this document 'staff' refers to all persons directly involved in the care of children at this setting, irrespective of their employment status, and includes students, trainees and volunteers.

"Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. Children must have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors. All Early Years providers must have access to an outdoor play area which can benefit the children."

Practice guidance for the EYFS (early years foundation stage)

Rationale

We recognise that children are active learners, and that brain and body develop together. Outdoor play offers unique opportunities that cannot be provided indoors. Outdoor play enables us to build on children's natural motivation to be outside as well as promoting active healthy lifestyles. If we are to support children's holistic development, outdoor play must be an integral part of our practice.

Aims

- We aim to provide a safe and secure, yet stimulating environment for all children to explore, engage and learn in the outdoor area.
- We aim to provide experiences that will enable all children to progress in all aspects of the EYFS
- We aim to ensure that all staff understand the value of outdoor play and so are enthusiastic and active in their approach to learning outside.

Objectives

- All children will be given the opportunity to access the outdoor environment both mornings and afternoons.
- The resources provided will support learning across the EYFS
- Planning will reflect individual interests, develop group work and thematic play
- Rules will be promoted in the outdoor area to promote a safe and secure environment.
- Staff will have regard for health and safety whilst allowing opportunity for positive risk taking.
- Staff will act as positive role models and facilitators of children's learning.
- Equality of play opportunities will be promoted by all adults supporting outdoor sessions.

Implementation and good practice

- Outdoor experiences are to be included in activity planning, clearly identified and linked to learning intentions for individual and groups of children
- The outdoor area of the setting is to be made accessible for use during sessions, and set up to reflect areas of interest and learning
- Staff will need to consider the practicalities when planning outdoor activities, and refer to the setting's outings policy when leaving the premises to ensure that adult/child ratios are not compromised
- Outdoor activities/experiences are not restricted to adult led/directed activities.
- Resources/equipment is taken outside when planned for, however, staff should acknowledge the natural resources in the environment eg: stones, leaves, etc. for maths or creative activities.
- Staff should ensure that their planning reflects the need for access to fresh air and exercise, enabling the children to have space to develop gross motor skills, and to provide opportunities for running and climbing that may not be possible in the indoor environment
- Staff should regularly audit any outdoor equipment and resources, to ensure that they are sufficient and fit for purpose.