

Outdoor Play Statement

Date of last review: October 2016

Conducted by: M. Jarrett (HoC), M. Haddon (SAO)

Date of next review: October 2017



Introduction

We believe that outdoor play is essential to all areas of children's development.

The outdoors can provide a scale and freedom for a type of play and learning that is not possible inside. There are play experiences that can only happen outdoors, where children have the space and the permission to be active, messy, noisy and to work on a grand scale.

Research continually backs up the notion that young children (especially boys) learn best when engaged in physical activity. We therefore aim to provide all children with continual access to high quality outdoor play and learning.

"The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky" - Margaret McMillan

Our Aims

We want an outdoor environment which is:

- safe and secure.
- mirrors the indoor space on a larger, more active scale and also provides experiences which inside cannot.
- planned to allow the children to access the 6 areas of learning stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

We want children who:

- are interested and motivated to learn outside,
- develop their large motor skills,
- care for the natural environment and respect living things,
- have free-flow access to the outside every day.

We want adults who:

- offer a balance between adult led and child initiated learning.
- offer support to all learning and play.
- enter into the play and learning with the children sensitively.
- are able to consider the next steps and as a result.
- are well trained in the rationale of outdoor learning.

Professional Development

- Staff will be continually assessed for training needs as part of the Performance Review Cycle.
- Inset training for the staff as a team on Outdoor Play and learning
- Parent workshops held in order that parents understand or rationale and practice within Outdoor Play and can use a similar approach at home.

Assessing and Planning the Outdoors

- Weekly and termly planning will always incorporate the outdoor spaces available.
- Adults will use their observations and assessments of the children's play and learning to feed into outdoor planning.
- These observations will also monitor which areas are being used well and those not so well.
- The EYFS will provide the framework of continuous provision for outdoor learning.
- Adults will talk with parents about their children to gather their input which will also inform outdoor planning.
- Outdoor resources will be assessed, evaluated and replenished when necessary in order to maintain a high quality provision.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Outside support and challenge, e.g. Islington consultants.
- Termly room observations of Outdoor play by Children Centre staff and feedback
- Peer observations and feedback to each other.
- Half termly planning analysis to ensure Outdoors is a high priority.

Sun Safe Procedures

At Ambler Children's Centre we acknowledge the importance of sun protection and want staff and children to enjoy the sun safely. We will work with staff and parents to achieve this.

Parents and guardians will be sent a letter explaining what we are doing about sun protection and how they can help at the beginning of the summer term and during summer holidays.

Shade:

- We will encourage children to sit/play in the shade where it is available.
- We have sun canopies in all play spaces to provide shade from the sun.

Timetabling:

- Staff will ensure that children are not outside in direct sunlight for long periods of time particularly during the middle of the day

Clothing:

- We ask parents to ensure that their children have sun hats and clothing that covers their shoulders during periods of hot, sunny weather.

Keeping hydrated:

- Staff will support children to recognise that they need to drink plenty of water during hot weather – fresh water is available to the children throughout the day.

Sunscreen:

- We will encourage families to apply sun protection cream to their children before bringing them to the Centre
- We will keep a supply of hypoallergenic sun protection cream in the rooms. Parents are asked to let their child's key person know if they prefer to provide their own cream.
- We will advertise the make of sun cream we are using as children may have allergic reactions to particular products.
- Staff will reapply sun protection cream throughout the day, as appropriate

Sandpit procedures

Whilst sandpits can provide great play and learning opportunities they can also pose several health and safety risks.

- At Ambler we will only use sand that is suitable for play and purchased from a recognised source.
- We ensure the sandpit is covered to prevent it being used as a litter tray by animals whilst also ensuring that it is regularly aired.
- We will ensure that the children are closely supervised whilst playing in the sandpit.
- We will teach the children about keeping the sand low to avoid it getting in their own and others eyes.
- If you would like your child to wear a hat whilst playing in the sand then please let us know.
- The sand is completely replaced on yearly basis.