



## Outdoor Play Policy

At Daisy and Rainbow Childcare, we believe outdoor play is vitally important to children's all-round development. Through playing outside children are gaining first-hand experience of nature and the elements and using big muscle movements while exposed to fresh air. We aim to provide outdoor play as part of our daily routine and as an extension to indoor play.

We recognise that being outside;

- Gives children the freedom to explore, use all their senses and be active.
- Has a positive effect on our sense of well being through access to fresh air and exercise which encourages a healthy lifestyle.
- Contributes to children's development in all areas for example; in order to write children need to gain muscle tone through physical activity; the spontaneity of outside play is great for children's speech and language development and the other areas of learning.
- Gives children an opportunity to access space and freedom, to foster their ability to free play and to explore boundaries within a safe environment.
- Develops children's breadth of senses via first-hand experience of the elements.
- Facilitates children's ability to discover and explore the natural world, for example, the weather, plants, mini beasts etc.
- Enables children to gain control of their body movements and embrace their limits.
- Enables children to use materials and resources in a different way e.g. on a big scale.
- Provides safe opportunities for risk and challenge with appropriate resources.
- Provides opportunities for movement which are restricted when indoors. Movement helps the two sides of the brain to connect.

Outdoor play is very important at all times.....

- We understand the importance of equal access to indoor and outdoor play and when at all possible the doors will be open to allow this extension.
- We have several wet weather suits and wellies which enable children to go out in the rain and stay relatively dry.
- We encourage parents to bring in hats and sunscreen in hot weather and we avoid going out during the hottest part of the day.
- We utilise any shaded and covered areas to extend and develop our use of our outdoor spaces.

When planning for outdoor play, we;

- Consider a range of experiences in the outside area from a quiet area where children can sit and reflect about nature and the world around us to resources which encourage gross motor movement. The area may also provide opportunities to dig, grow plants, roll, jump, write, draw, read, crawl, pull, push, run, skip, hop, role play, paint, pour, fill, empty and climb which all support children's speaking and listening skills.
- We ensure that children have opportunity to access the natural environment through planting, mud, water and sand play.
- Engage the children in deciding which resources they would like to have access to in the garden.
- Expect the children to be involved in tidying up the outdoor area at end of the day and general maintenance.
- Focus on children's interests and schemas and plan for them so children can have continuity in their play.

- Bear in mind, the range of skills involved in children's gross motor movement: such as pulling/pushing; pedalling; steering; sliding; climbing; balancing; hanging by arms; swinging; jumping; hopping; using a jump rope; hula hooping; tossing things in containers; catching; throwing and kicking (ref ECERS).
- Recognise that this may be a great environment to extend a child's ability to gauge, engage and respond to risk which will in turn provide a sense of achievement and an awareness of how far a child can extend their skills within the bounds of safety.
- Enable children to experience the joy of being able to sleep and eat outside.
- Ensure we have a wide range of "loose part" resources available for children to be able to engage with in any way which inspires them. For example, ropes, wood, stones, wheels, blocks, tyres, natural resources, pans, tarpaulins.....
- At Daisy we plan for regular Muddy Boot sessions and at Rainbow regular Nature PAWS sessions are provided.

From research we know....:

- 'As a baby thinks with its mouth, a child thinks with fingers and limbs' Susan Isaacs (1885-1948)
- 'Space is as necessary as food and air' Margaret McMillan (1860-1931)
- 'Ample experience in running, climbing and balancing is necessary if children are to learn to read and write successfully' Majorie Ouvry (2002)
- Playing with open-ended materials like mud stimulate creativity and imagination
- The same release of serotonin that occurs when playing in mycobacterium vaccae dirt has also been shown to improve cognitive function....Playing with mud will help your child to learn!

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