

General Welfare Requirement: Safety and suitability of premises, environment and equipment

Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area or, if that is not possible, ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis (unless circumstances make this inappropriate, for example, unsafe weather conditions)

Outdoor play policy

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child's development. It provides children with experiences which enable them to develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. In doing so it provides a rich context for the development of their languages and encourages positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.

Outdoor play should be seen as an integral part of Early Years provision. At Playways Pre-school, whilst children are involved in self- chosen activities, they move freely between indoor and outdoor areas using the resources which best meet their needs on a daily basis, all the year round.

The aim of both indoor and outdoor play is to provide a stimulating environment for children's learning in all areas of the preschool curriculum. Close observation is essential in order to assess children's ability and to ensure appropriate planning and continuity for the outdoor curriculum.

The provision and planning for outdoor play, just as indoor play, must reflect the diversity and richness of the experience and developing interests of the children.

“The outdoor environment”

- Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development.
- Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.
- It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural worlds.
- Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant”

The Early Years Foundation Stage 2007

“Some opportunities for learning can only happen outside. The experience of a change in the weather, finding a colony of ants under a big stone, making a large-scale construction with huge cardboard cartons or painting on great long strips of wallpaper all of these motivate children into mental and physical engagement, and can only be done outside.”

“The outdoor space must be viewed as an essential teaching and learning environment which is linked with the learning that goes on inside, but with even greater status because it allows for children to learn through movement.”

‘Exercising muscles and minds – Outdoor play and the early years curriculum,’ Marjorie Ouvry, The National Early Years Network 2000.

Playways Pre-school’s emphasis is on outdoor play, ensuring that the children are actively involved in physical activities, this benefits the children to become healthier, happier and more physically competent when playing outdoors. Outdoor play considers the provision of opportunities for children to connect to different skills, ideas, knowledge and materials which promotes social learning, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Playways Pre-school provides a framework for the children to have the opportunity to:

- Have a more co-ordinated approach to outdoor play and increase the opportunities available to be physically active.
- Reinforce appropriate messages in relation to physical activity.
- Ensure quality of access and participation for all.
- Communicate shared vision, ethos and values to children, parents and the wider community.

Our overall rationale of outdoor play at Playways Pre-school is to ensure that the children are offered a wide range of activities outside. We thrive on providing movement as it is a child’s most natural form of expression and should be an essential part of their everyday experience. The growth and development of the brain, body and feelings are inseparable and in today’s world where children no longer have the freedom to wander, make a noise, and enjoy boisterous play as they once did, it is even more important.

We ensure we provide a carefully planned environment, providing opportunities for ‘risky freedom’, this helps all children to find out about themselves and their capabilities. It also helps develop self-confidence, independence and lays the foundations for a healthier life.

The opportunity to play outside, throughout the year, in all different kinds of weather is as important as playing inside. Nearly everything that is provided inside can be provided outside and some of the best learning can only happen outside. For many children, the learning that happens outdoors is the most important. For this reason, any child who is not well enough to use the outdoor environment is deemed not well enough to attend pre-school.

Children will get wet and muddy and it is therefore essential for parents to provide their children with appropriate clothing and footwear.

This will need to include:

- A waterproof coat
- Wellies
- Indoor shoes
- Hat and gloves
- Sunhat and sun-cream

At the Playways Pre-school we strongly agree with the quote:

“There is no such thing as bad weather just inappropriate clothing”

Our aim is to promote enthusiasm, enjoyment and confidence while developing each child's physical skills and abilities.

Our objectives are to provide a well-balanced programme of activities to support the physical development, health and well-being of children. Our outdoor learning environment provides a range of opportunities, sufficient space, time and resources to allow time for effective physical development time, opportunity and support for children with motor impairment or physical disabilities in partnership with outside agencies. At Playways Pre-school we ensure that children have access to outdoor play every day, all year round. A daily health and safety check of the outside area and equipment is carried out before taking the children out and any defects are removed.

The role of the adult is to:

- provide planning and resources for a challenging outdoor area that is integral with overall planning and identifies practitioners to support adult lead activities
- set up and store equipment safely
- observe key children/focus children and plan appropriately
- be an active role model interacting and supporting children's learning and planned play
- provide varied opportunities for supporting and encouraging children to explore and extend their experiences
- extend and develop children's language and communication in their play
- consult and involve children in planning
- support our colleagues

- ensure appropriate ratios are maintained
- wear appropriate clothing and advise parents and carers on clothing suitable for outdoor learning

When planning and organising the outdoor environment, Playways Pre-school staff ensure they meet the requirements of the EYFS. Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

Through play in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules;
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings;
- Take risks and make mistakes;
- Think creatively and imaginatively;
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems; express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Playways Pre-school ensures that equality of opportunity outside is covered by the following:

- Ensuring that all children have the ability or support to play and explore in the outdoor area.
- Monitoring how children use the outdoor area