

LANCASHIRE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE – EARLY  
YEARS AND WHITEFIELD NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL,  
NELSON LANCASHIRE

## EYFS - Setting up Outdoor Provision to Support Teaching and Learning – COVID 19

**This document has been written to support schools in thinking about  
how to create exciting outdoor spaces to support teaching and  
learning on the return to school**



**This document should be read in conjunction with the latest guidance from the  
Department for Education**



This document should be read in conjunction with the latest guidance from the DfE – see *the end of the document for the links and guidance May /June 2020*

***Included in this document is:***

**Lists of possible  
resources for use  
outdoors**

**Top tips  
to keep  
equipment clean  
and sanitised**

**Ideas on how to  
organise and store  
outdoor equipment  
and resources**



**Photographs of  
outdoor provision  
from Whitefield  
Nursery and Infant  
School, Nelson**

## Top Tips for Keeping Equipment Clean and Sanitised:

### Remember to keep this manageable

- ✓ Create a timetable for setting up and cleaning outdoor resources to operate throughout the day as well as at the end of the day or session and /or before use of the area and resources by another group or 'bubble' of children.
- ✓ Children and staff to wash hands before access to outdoor learning and again before returning to classroom provision.
- ✓ Provide an outdoor hand washing station for the children and staff to use.
- ✓ Provide an outdoor cleaning station - plastic bins with lids/liners to contain any germs, and clean as part of the daily cleaning routine.
- ✓ Fill bowls and buckets with water and a suitable anti- bacterial cleaner such as Milton and leave toys and equipment to soak for at least 15 minutes or 24 hours for a deep clean. Or put toys in laundry nets , wash and hang outside to dry.
- ✓ Wipe resources and equipment down daily and carry out a deep clean with an anti-bacterial solution, at the end of the week or when there is a change over of children.
- ✓ Store small resources in plastic baskets with holes – these can be immersed into buckets or bowls of sanitising liquid, and left to dry.
- ✓ Use pillow cases or net washing bags to wash small construction /plastic small world resources in washing machines or dish washers.
- ✓ Use PE mats, plastic coated table cloths, tarpaulin sheets, shower curtains which are easy to wipe down and useful for floor activities such as construction or small world. Plastic grass is also a great alternative.
- ✓ Large equipment and outdoor toys which cannot be immersed in water can be wiped with a suitable solution and left for 15 minutes. This can be done daily for use by the same children, followed by a deep clean at the end of the week or when the equipment is to be used by a different group or 'bubble' of children.
- ✓ A small selection of books can be provided in the outdoor area to support outdoor learning. These can be wiped with antibacterial solution daily. At the end of the week or period of time in school for that group of children the books can be given a thorough clean and quarantined for seven days before used again.
- ✓ Laminated sheets information /instruction sheets, puppet characters, writing sheets will be useful and easy to keep clean.
- ✓ Children can also be encouraged to wash and clean resources in outdoor provision by popping in buckets of soapy water when they have finished....ready for other children to use.

**(See DfE website links at the end of the document on cleaning and hygiene)**



## **Suitable equipment for storage and suggestions of how resources can be organised:**

Look at your outdoor spaces (outside the classroom, playgroup, fields, garden, woodlands, etc.) and identify which areas which can be reasonably used to provide outdoor learning over a day, a week or period of time.

Consider what resources you will provide for each area or space. Resources which may be specific to the area, e.g. small apparatus for an open space. Also consider other resources or equipment which could further enhance learning in this area, e.g. laminated numbers, whiteboards for writing games, tallies or scores.

A plastic coated wire PE storage trolley or lunch box trolley could be useful to store boxes /resources for outdoor learning. They can be easily moved to different areas of spaces within the outdoors.

- ✓ Plastic storage boxes or crates, shopping trolleys, large supermarket shopping bags can be used to collect and store resources for use in an area or for specific activities. These will make resources portable and easy to store and clean.
- ✓ Add empty plastic containers – ice cream containers, yoghurt pots, plastic fresh fruit trays to areas of provision to support children's play, e.g. in the outdoor kitchen; to support water play – emptying, pouring – with and without holes.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of resources accessible in each area of provision, to make setting up , packing away and cleaning manageable.
- ✓ Reduce the number of resources in storage boxes, but maintaining a choice of resources to support independence and self- selection.
- ✓ Use PE mats, tarpaulin sheets, shower curtains to create outdoor play spaces including simple dens, a base for construction activities on the floor.
- ✓ Tuff trays are useful to provide exciting activities and resources on the floor, on tables or the top of cable reels and can be easily moved and cleaned.
- ✓ Provide laminated information /activity sheets to support outdoor learning, including photographs, recipes for the outdoor kitchen, to support phonics, literacy, maths, writing, etc.

## Investigation Kitchen

- There are differing views and advice on using mud as part of mud kitchen play at the moment, however many settings have developed a mud kitchen as part of their provision. Making this an 'investigation kitchen' or a 'potion kitchen' will ensure it can be cleaned easily and resources can be washed or thrown away after use.
- Consider how this area can help develop fine motor skills in the Autumn term – cutting, chopping, grating etc. by adding scissors (for cutting herbs, cabbage leaves, petals), safety knives (for cutting fruit and vegetables), graters for grating lemons, limes, carrots, potatoes etc. for vegetable soup.
- Add laminated recipe cards for children to follow and read, to consolidate early maths and literacy skills.







### Possible Resources:

- Stones
- Pebbles
- Shells
- Bottle tops
- Conkers
- Potpourri
- Fruit for chopping
- Lemons/limes for squeezing
- Graters
- Pots and pans
- Plastic picnic sets
- Metal/plastic spoons and ladles
- Safety knives
- Juicers
- Garlic press
- Scissors
- Herbs
- Leaves
- Petals
- Food colouring for coloured water
- Recipe cards to read and follow
- Wood painted in blackboard paint for instruction and recipes



## Small World

- Create simple spaces with tuff trays, cable reels or log piles that can be quickly changed depending on children's interests or key themes.
- Tyres or plant pots with ferns or small conifers create a great space to help develop children's play and imagination.
- Add plastic mini-beasts, dinosaurs and wild animals. Laminated vocabulary cards will encourage children to read outdoors, whilst developing their language.
- Add a book where possible to develop story-telling/fact finding. This will need to be wiped down and quarantined for 7 days each week or in-between bubble use.
- Animals/vehicles will need to be washed weekly.

### Possible Resources:

- Tuff tray
- Crates
- Pots/tyres with planting
- Large plastic cars/trucks
- Large plastic mini-beasts, dinosaurs, wild animals
- Logs/tree stumps
- Laminates signs/labels
- Wood painted with blackboard paint for signs and labels
- Books
- Plastic bowls





## Construction

- Try and use large items that can be hosed down or cleaned regularly. - bread crates/milk crates are a great resource.
- Add tarpaulin and large pegs for developing fine motor skills and simple construction opportunities.
- Buckets filled with cement with broom handles in make great starting points for shelters/dens,
- Laminates pictures of famous building or building in the local area will inspire children's creativity.
- Adding blackboards or clipboard will encourage children to mark-making and plan their designs first.



- Add small world vehicles, animals, mini-beasts to enhance play and enable children to engage in meaningful activities.
- Consider having big box activities – children can have their own boxes to create a model special to them. Photographs taken can then be shared on the whiteboard, or printed and laminated and displayed in the area for ideas for other children.

### Possible Resources:

- Milk/bread crates
- Laminated pictures with examples of things to build.
- Clipboard and paper or blackboard for designing constructions
- Form blocks that can be washed
- Buckets
- Large plant pots
- Tyres
- Form blocks
- Perspex/cut off plastic strips
- Tarpaulin
- Plastic pegs
- Cardboard boxes, empty plastic containers, e.g. yoghurt pots.



## Music

- Children will need an initial focus on phase 1 phonics at the start of Reception, due to missing much of their time in Nursery. Music areas will help integrate this into outdoor provision.
- Add laminated nursery rhymes for children to sing and develop a steady beat.
- Add picture cards for children to choose and tap out the number of sounds heard (eg d-o-g, sh-i-p, sh-ee-p) to develop oral blending and segmenting.
- Add laminated numbers for children to pick and tap the correct number of beats.
- Add plastic beaters than can be washed or wiped down after use.



### Possible Resources:

- Pots and pans
- Plastic bowls/drums
- Beaters – plastic spoons, sticks, ladles, spatulas etc.
- Laminated nursery rhymes, numbers
- Dog bowls
- Empty chocolate tubs/biscuit tins
- Uprturned plastic bins as drums



## Water

Water play opportunities can still be lots of fun with potential for learning across all areas. Here are some ideas which offer alternatives to the water tray:

- Provide opened ended resources for children to explore water in different ways without having a water tray. Having an outdoor tap will open these opportunities for children to explore moving water and engage in activities involving transporting water.
- Water can be used as a way to engage children in problem solving challenges for example creating different waterway to explore how water can move round and through a range of resources such as pipes, tubes, drainpipes, guttering. Add objects such as plastic cars, balls, marbles which can be used to move around the waterways.
- Adding wheelbarrows, buckets, containers of different sizes will allow children to fill, pour and empty a range of vessels, exploring different ways in which water can be moved and transported as well as introducing children to vocabulary linked to capacity, measurement and number.
- Children could make simple boats from plastic junk resources and explore how they can move along waterways, down guttering. Simple challenges to investigate how their boats move when filled with objects.



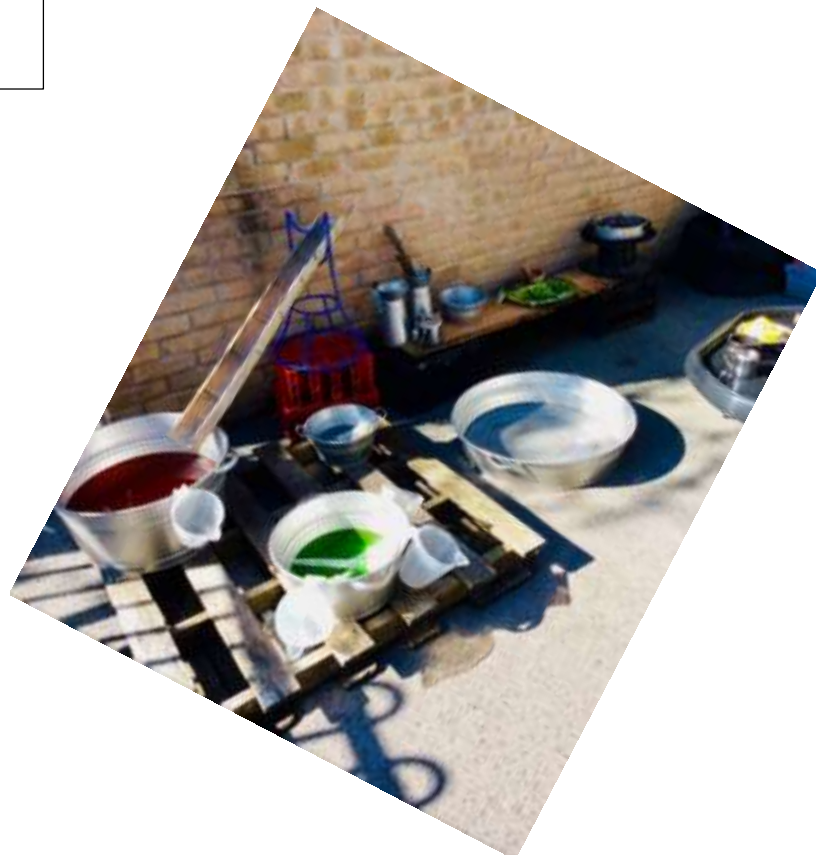


### Possible resources:

- Buckets, trugs, metal and plastic containers and bowls of different sizes
- Builders pipes, drainpipes, guttering of different lengths
- Water stands
- Jugs, containers – with and without holes, funnels
- Teapots/tea-set
- Whisk, pipettes, turkey basters
- Tuff spot, small trays
- Plastic trucks, cars and vehicles of different sizes and types
- Balls – rubber, plastic with and without holes
- Timers
- Whiteboards
- Wheel vehicles, prams, large trucks, etc.
- Junk materials to make simple boats



- Provide water in different sized containers along with pipettes and turkey basters to allow children to explore adding colour to water. This will generate discussion about the colour and shade of the water as different amounts are added.
- Children could have their open bowl to mix and explore water. Include whisks, spoons with and without holes, ladles, adding bubbles and gloop so the children can explore with tools rather than their hands
- Create a car wash or washing station to wash toys, to support children with their role play and imagination. Add a whiteboard to write messages, prices, deal of the week, etc.



## Mark Making and Writing

Mark making and writing can be so much fun outdoors. With the additional opportunity to engage in large arm and wrist movements it is also a great way to develop upper body strength and control which is so important for hand writing.

- Offer children lots of activities which involve making large movements and patterns using sticks, paint /paint brushes – with paint or water , chucks on the floor or the walls, or chalkboard pens for windows. Provide a dice with patterns such as zigzags, spirals, castle turrets to play a simple 'draw what you see game'. The dice can be used for letter formation too.
- Having patterns and letters for the children to practise will make the task more purposeful and then children can be further challenged to make you their own patterns or write letters or simple words.



Wood planks (varnished for easy cleaning) with patterns for children to trace over with a small tool are great, and then children can have a go at drawing the pattern independently.

Letter cards or on wood slices for children to copy or trace over with a tool or their fingers

Phonemes, HFW and tricky words on wood slices along with writing tools, paper, tuff trays . Encourage children to practise letter formation, and have a go at writing simple words or sentences using their phonic knowledge.

- Provide lots of laminated paper of different lengths, shapes and sizes for the children to write simple notes of messages around the outdoor provision.
- Encourage children to make signs for small world, labels for models and for the plants they are growing, instructions or menus in the outdoor kitchen, or special offers in their outdoor shop. This could also include writing simple numbered instructions, numbered clues for a simple treasure hunt, or number games on the playground.
- Mark making can also link to maths with opportunities for children to represent their simple calculations, problem solving, tallies or to have a go at practising writing number symbols.

### Possible Resources:

- Portable plastic outdoor writing boxes or carriers - these could even be plastic lunch boxes.
- A selection of writing implements including chalks, pencils, pencil crayons
- Paint brushes, - water paint or water
- Letters on laminated card or wood slices – varnished for easy wiping
- Phonemes on laminated cards or wood slices
- HFW or tricky words on cards of wood slices
- Laminated paper of different sizes
- Hole punches and plastic cord for children to make their own books
- Whiteboard pens
- Chalkboard
- Whiteboard
- Number symbol cards





## Maths

Maths provision outdoors can be provided in a maths area as well as across the other outdoor areas and spaces within the outdoor provision. There are lots of opportunities for the development of mathematical skills, concepts and knowledge in the water area, through the outdoor kitchen, mark making, investigation areas, etc. Adults can support children in developing mathematical vocabulary when working with children in the outdoor provision.



Providing lots of small resources in plastic boxes or containers, along with number symbols, up to and beyond 20 (on laminated card, on stones or pebbles, wood slices, plastic spoons, etc.) will allow opportunities for a wide range of number activities including place value, counting, 1:1 correspondence and simple calculations in a fun and open ended way. Support from skilled adults will allow the interaction with these resources to be a purposeful way of developing number concepts. Putting these resources in washing nets at the end of the day will make cleaning easy and manageable.



- Explore mathematical vocabulary linked to number and measurement throughout the provision, including weight, length, size, time, e.g. how long does it take for the water to move down the waterway? How many slices can we chop the cabbage into? Will be this bowl be big enough to mix the potion?
- Small boxes /rucksacks with resources to support mathematical development can be easily prepared and the boxes can be added to the areas of provision. A laminated list of the contents will support organisation and tidying up. Easily cleaned resources can be wiped after use and put in net bags for a deep clean at the end of the week.
- Opportunities to play simple games which can be drawn on the playground, e.g. hopscotch, draw a number in a circle and find the correct number of objects.

### Possible Resources:

- Shells,
- Glass beads or nuggets
- Pebbles,
- Plastic collections such as mini-beast, compare bears, transport
- Plastic containers or sorting trays
- Laminated number up to 20 and beyond
- Laminated number lines
- Small squares of plastic grass
- Wood slices or limited cards with number symbol and corresponding number of spots
- Cable reels as small tables
- Plastic hoops
- Chalks /chalk board
- Talking pegs
- Number dice with symbols and or corresponding quantity
- Timers
- Plastic straws for measuring
- Plastic storage boxes or rucksacks



## Other Ideas and Activities for Outdoors

- Create a simple outdoor gym with a carousel of activities for the children – 5 star jumps, 5 jumps in and out of the hoop, 5 bunny hops, running on the spot for 10 seconds, etc. Write instructions on a whiteboard; write scores and challenges.
- Encourage balancing and movement games, including simple races and assault courses. Have some fun with games such as musical freeze, follow my leader, funny walks, etc. All these games can be carried out safely with small groups of children in an open space.
- Create simple outdoor investigation rucksacks with laminated sheets to write on, plastic binoculars, magnifying glasses and if going on a nature hunt in the school grounds, and include spotter sheets. Look for spiders webs, birds in the sky, investigate different leaves and tree bark.



### Possible resources:

- Small outdoor apparatus – hoops, balls, plastic bats, plastic coated bean bags, etc.
  - Wipeable fabric rucksacks with binoculars, laminated sheets, whiteboard pens, magnifying glasses
  - Ring games songs and rhymes laminated and displayed outdoors.
  - Washing line, plastic pegs
  - Laminated pictures of familiar stories.
- Teach children simple ring games – where children do not need to hold hands and can be positioned at a safe distance, using chalked circles, hoops or plastic spots on the floor. for example ‘what time is it Mr Wolf’, hokey cokey, in and out the dusty bluebells
  - Create opportunities for children to sequence stories using laminated pictures, plastic pegs and a plastic washing line.



## DfE links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june/planning-guide-for-early-years-and-childcare-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-the-wider-opening-of-early-years-and-childcare-settings-from-1-june> - 24th May 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings> - May 2020 Public Health England

Public Health England has published an updated poster that provides guidance on hygiene in educational settings. The poster can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teach-children-simple-hygiene-to-help-curb-infections> - hand washing

**17<sup>th</sup> June 2020** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19>

**17<sup>th</sup> June 2020** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-coronavirus-covid-19>

**2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>