

L C I S
Language Communication Interaction Service



Outdoor play and Activities



Outdoor Play

Outdoor learning brings the benefits of formal and informal learning together.

'The most meaningful learning occurs through acquiring knowledge and skills through real life, practical or hands-on activities'. (Ofsted)

Scientific evidence shows there is a lower risk of spreading coronavirus outdoors. The droplets that carry the virus fall to the floor more quickly outside and are dispersed by air movement. It is however important to continue to social distance.

Outdoor learning can be within the outside play areas at school or within the community where the pupil lives or further afield.

Outside at school

Most class-based activities can be transferred outside, such as construction, imaginative play and creative activities. When setting up activities it is important to remember to:

- Mark the area with a boundary, cones, chairs or tyres could be used. (A taped or drawn line on the ground may not be clear enough for a pupil to understand. Not all pupils will understand boundaries, especially social partners).
- Ensure the activity is motivating for the pupil; this will encourage them to stay within the boundary.
- Make sure there are cleaning materials available to clean any equipment down after use.
- Use visual representation to show the transition to the location of the activity.

This booklet contains outdoor activities that are suitable for pupils at all SCERTS communication stages. Please be aware, some of these activities will not be suitable for certain communication stages.

Outdoor Sensory Circuit

A sensory circuit is a motor skills programme to enable pupils to engage in learning. During focused learning time, a pupil may give clues to show they are finding it difficult to connect with the learning process. Having a sensory circuit each day helps to support and prepare a pupil to accept and focus during learning tasks. Although sensory circuits are usually indoors, they can easily be set up outside, weather permitting and depending on what space is available.

A sensory circuit is set up with three different coloured zones. You can choose what colours to use as long as they are the same each session and are not used for other areas of learning.

Alerting: Provide vestibular stimulation. This means to prepare the brain for the demands of the school environment.

Organising: For the pupil to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time.

Calming: Provide input to ensure the pupil returns to class calmly after the sensory circuit.

Examples of what you will need:

Alert: Trampoline, gym ball, hurdles, hoops.

Organise: Balance beam, flexible tunnel, beanbags, body board.

Calm: Fan, blanket, vibrating snake, ball.

1. Sensory circuit is set up outside, each area is clearly defined e.g. using colour cones or arrows to show directions. One pupil should complete the circuit at a time. Make sure there are 2-3 activities for each area.
2. If possible, use a visual timetable to show each transition. Attach to a fence, or the back of a chair.
3. The pupil begins in the 'Alert' area. The pupil stays at one activity until a signal from the adult e.g. an alarm or bell. The pupil moves onto the next 'alert' activity. Once all the alert activities are complete, the pupil moves on to the 'Organise' area. Each activity should last about two minutes.
4. The pupil completes each activity following the same routine as previously described. Once each activity is completed, the pupil moves onto the 'Calm' area.
5. The pupil completes each activity following the same routine as previously with the 'Organise' section. Once each activity is complete, the pupil has completed the circuit.

It is important to remember:

- After each pupil has completed the circuit, all equipment should be cleaned thoroughly.
- For the calming section, specific items e.g. blanket, should be individual to the pupil, and kept in a labelled bag for that pupil. (As a blanket may be difficult to wash, maybe use a thinner washable piece of material instead).
- If possible, use music to play during each section, e.g. an upbeat piece for the 'alert' section, a different piece for the 'organise' section and a slower piece for the 'calm' section.
- A visual timetable will support the pupil with understanding what happens next.



This is a visual timetable showing the colour areas for each section. If the pupil doesn't understand the colours, use an object to represent each area e.g. a different coloured material or teddy bear for each area.

Sensory Garden

Some ideas you may choose:

- A safe, quiet space to explore.
- Strong smelling plants, e.g. rosemary, lavender etc. (Make sure they are safe for the pupil to touch).



- Mobiles that can be hung from branches or fences.
- Wind chimes.
- Spinning items.
- Water feature, this could be just a bowl of water containing motivating items.
- Different textured stepping-stones.
- Something to sit on e.g. benches, chairs or beanbags.

1. Setting up a sensory garden can be temporary or permanent. There are many ideas that can be included that are not expensive.
2. A sensory garden is a calm and quiet area.
3. Allow the pupil to explore at their pace. Give them opportunities to explore the environment. Not all activities will be explored to begin with. Adult to gradually introduce different areas.
4. Make sure that all resources are cleaned after the pupil has finished using them.



Here are some wind spinners and mobiles



Wall of music and water fun



Two examples of wind chimes that can be made easily

Picture hide and seek

You will need:

- Pictures of favourite characters e.g. Spiderman, Mr Maker
- Laminator
- A container
- Coloured paper
- Sticky back plastic

1. Decide on the characters that motivate the pupil. Find pictures and print them. Laminate and cut them out.
2. Find a container e.g. a Pringles pot; cover it in paper and sticky backed plastic. Cut a slit in the lid, big enough to fit the character pictures in.
3. Attach a picture to the container to show the pupil who they are looking for. Use Velcro so the picture can be changed.
4. Set up the area outside by hiding the pictures for the pupil to find. Depending on the pupil, this can be as easy or difficult for them.
5. The adult takes the pupil to the area, models to the pupil to find the pictures and post them into the container.
6. The activity is finished when all the pictures have been found. If the pupil is reluctant to go to an area, the pictures could make a trail for the pupil to follow and collect.



Mr Maker find the shapes activity

Car wash

You will need:

- Sponge and cloths
- Soapy water
- Cars and bikes

1. Ensure the pupil does not have any allergies and can use the soapy water.
2. Section off an area for the car wash. Make sure there is a bucket of soapy water for the pupil.
3. Allow the pupil to choose a sponge or cloth he or she would like to use.
4. Adult to model how to dip the sponge into the water and wash the car.
5. Make sure the pupil has a change of clothes, so they can change if they get wet. The pupil may be happier to change into his or her own clothes.



Washing car with a sponge

Water Play

You will need:

- Individual tray of water
 - Motivating items to add
 - Apron or a change of clothes
1. Decide what motivating items to add to the tray of water, if the pupil likes transport or dinosaurs these will encourage the pupil to explore.
 2. The tray of water is for one pupil only, change the water and tray if used again. If the pupil does not like wearing an apron, to avoid dysregulation, have a change of clothes to change into once water play has finished.
 3. Adult to encourage pupil to play and explore the items in the water.
 4. Once activity has finished clean all the items in the water and the water tray.



Dinosaur themed water play



Sea creatures in soapy water

Mud or Sand Play

You will need:

- Tray
 - Soil or sand
 - Water
 - Tools or other resources to put in the soil
 - Bowl of soapy water
 - A towel
1. Place soil or sand into a tray and add as much water as required. (This tray of soil or sand is only for one pupil).
 2. Add some tools or motivating items to the tray, to encourage the pupil to explore e.g. dinosaurs, scoops, buckets, pots etc.
 3. Adult to model and encourage the pupil how to play with the soil or sand.
 4. When the pupil has finished, wash hands in the bowl of soapy water and dry hands.
 5. Any tools or items used by the pupil will need to be washed. The used tray can be kept for another day for the same pupil.



Diggers and trucks in soil



Motivating objects in sand

Fun with Paint

You will need:

- Old clothes
- Different colour washable paint
- Large sheets of paper
- Bowl of soapy water
- Towel

1. Lay out some large sheets of paper on the ground with some trays of paint.
2. Change the pupil into old clothes; it does not matter if they cover themselves in paint.
3. If the pupil is happy to, encourage them to place hands or feet into the paint and make prints on the paper. If the pupil is not happy to do this due to sensory sensitivities, have items that can be placed into the paint.
4. Once the pupil has finished, they can use the bowl of water to wash themselves, they can then dry themselves with a towel.
5. Wash all items used by the pupil.



Tyre marks in paint



Hand prints in selected paint colour



Sponge roller in sea coloured paint

Throwing activities

You will need:

Safe items to throw, such as:

- Large containers, e.g. buckets, dustbin, storage container
 - Skittles
 - Plastic bottles
- For any throwing activity, there needs to be a clear space. All items need to be easy to clean after each pupil. If a pupil likes to throw, having opportunities to throw will support their regulation. Safe items include balls, beanbags, paper balls etc. Throwing into a bucket or bin means the pupil can have something to aim for, but this may not be motivating for them. Throwing up into the air and watching the object fall to the ground may be more exciting.
- Some pupils may like the cause and effect from knocking over skittles. If skittles are available, plastic bottles can also work well. If there is a wall available, the bottles could stand on the wall and the pupil could knock off the bottles by throwing a ball or beanbag. Add water with colour and glitter to the bottles to add some stability.



Washable beanbags



Light and easy to clean balls



Storage container



Bottle skittles

Paper bag Kite

You will need:

- Paper bags
- String
- Stickers or felt pens to decorate
- Strips of crepe paper

1. Encourage the pupil to decorate their paper bag. Stickers or mark making is fine; whatever the pupil is comfortable with.
2. The pupil can add strips of crepe paper onto the bag to make a tail for the kite.
3. Adult to add string to the paper bag, this can be done by making a hole in the bottom of the bag and adding the string, reinforce the hole using tape or page hole reinforces.
4. Add a lolly stick to the end of the string; this will make it easier for the pupil to hold.
5. The pupil can run around with the kite outside or it can be hung up high to catch the breeze.



Examples of paper bag kites

Out and about in the Community

There are many learning opportunities for pupils out within the local community. These can be planned visits with the school, but also family trips with parents and siblings.

Things to remember:

- For any school visit, a risk assessment will need to be completed.
- Not all pupils will understand social distancing; keep this in mind when choosing a place to visit.
- Make sure there is access to toilets and hand washing facilities. Hand sanitiser needs to be taken with the pupil.
- Plan the trip in advance. Further considerations e.g. will pupils travel on public transport, will facemasks need to be worn, how the pupil will cope with this.
- Visual representation is important to support the pupil's understanding of where he/she will be going.

Visit to the Park

Many different activities can be explored with a visit to the park. It is important to avoid areas of the park, which are closed, especially if they are motivating to the pupil. The activities below can be as part of a school trip or a family going to the park.

Let us find activity

You will need:

- Picture list of items to find
- Laminate
- Dry wipe board pen
- A bag

1. Using clear pictures make a list of items for the pupil to find. Make sure the pupil knows what the items are. These could include a leaf, stick, pinecone or stone.
2. Print off the list, laminate it and place on a clipboard.
3. Find an appropriate bag for the pupil to collect the items in.
4. A visual timetable of where the pupil is going should be prepared and ready for the pupil when leaving home or school.

- When at the park, show the pupil the picture list and model how to find the first item. When the item is found, show the pupil how to place it in the bag and tick it off the picture list using the dry wipe board pen.
- Once all the items have been found, it is important for the pupil to wash hands, if available, or use the hand sanitiser.

If finding different items to collect is too difficult, the list could be to find different items and tick them off a picture list e.g. gate, park bench or water feature. The pupil can tick it off their list. The pupil could also take a photo of each item as they find them.

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Picnic lunch

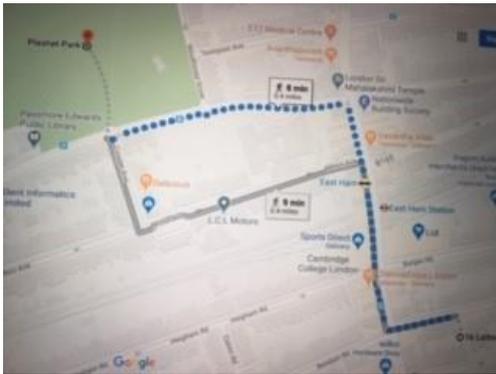
Going to the park for a picnic is a lovely way for pupils to have access to outdoor play and to sit down to have lunch:

- Prepare a packed lunch for the pupil; make sure there are foods that the pupil will eat. This is not a time to introduce new foods.
- Make sure the visual timetable shows each step of the trip to the park, e.g. walk to park, lay out blanket, sit on blanket, eat packed lunch etc. Throughout the visit to the park, it is important to use a visual timetable consistently.

A planned walk

If a pupil really likes maps and is able to follow a route, why not plan a walk and mark it out on a map, so they can follow it. Keep the map simple, use a highlighter pen to show the pupil, which route you will be taking. Encourage the pupil to hold the map and direct you where to go.

In Newham, The Greenway is an excellent place to walk, as it is free from traffic. There are many things to see on route and you can join it and walk for a distance that is suitable for the pupil.



Examples of different maps of Newham

Visit to the shops

It is important to plan this very carefully, as most shops will have a queuing system in place. Considerations include: will the pupil be able to wait before going into the shop? If this is going to be difficult, it is important to go at a time when the shop is less busy and any queue is likely to be short.

It is important to remember:

1. Visual representation to show all the transitions, from travelling to the shop, waiting in a queue, collecting a trolley or basket, going to the till to pay and travelling home.
2. It may be nice for the pupil to have a shopping list of what to look out for. This could be written in words, pictures or objects e.g. packaging of the item to support their understanding.
3. Keep the visit short, a quick visit and pupil is more likely to remain calm and regulated.
4. Adults to plan a strategy if the pupil becomes dysregulated e.g. take a calming item, a visual where the pupil can take a break, ear defenders, listen to music etc.



Ear defenders



Take a break communication card



Small sensory toys

Favourite transport

Many pupils are motivated by transport. It may not always be possible to travel by public transport, but having opportunities to see their transport, could be a fun and exciting activity.

- The pupil has a list of different bus numbers to find, go to the bus station to see if you can spot them. The list can be made the same way as the previous list for finding items at the park.
- The pupil has a list of different forms of transportation to find.
- Make sure that if the pupil has a list of transport to find that all are found, as if any are left, the pupil may become dysregulated.

Key Points

I hope this pack has given you some ideas about activities you can do within school and out in the community.

The most important things to remember with all activities are:

- Always have a **visual timetable** prepared for all activities. Make sure that this is suitable for the communication stage e.g. objects of reference or photos, depending on the pupils understanding.
- Emotional regulation is key to a pupil being able to engage in activities. Before an activity, the pupil may need to use a strategy to self-regulate e.g. 10 minutes jumping on a trampoline or squeezing a tactile object.

Most Importantly:

Have Fun