



canopies uk

Outdoor play for early years

Creating a safe environment

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Why outdoor play?

Early years outdoor play is more important than ever

“Anyone who takes children outside regularly sees the enjoyment, and sense of wonder and excitement that is generated when children actively engage with their environment.”

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom



Outdoor play has long been an important feature of early years education. The benefits to children's wellbeing and development are widely recognised. Early years lessons provide children with the confidence and awareness to explore the world around them.

In a post-pandemic world, safe outdoor learning environments are especially important to children's wellbeing. Children may not have as many opportunities to get outside and outdoor play and physical exercise are needed to relieve stress and help kids feel happier.



The 10 Principles of Outdoor Play

1. Indoors and outdoors should be viewed as one environment.
2. Indoors and outdoors need to be accessible simultaneously to children.
3. Outdoors should receive the same planning and resourcing as indoors.
4. Outdoors is a teaching and learning environment.
5. The layout and design of outdoor areas needs careful consideration.
6. Outdoor play is central to early years learning.
7. The outdoor classroom provides the opportunity to use effective modes of learning.
8. Children need versatile environments and equipment.
9. Children need the ability to modify and change their environment.
10. Staff must support outdoor play.

Principles of Outdoor Play in the Early Years, Dr Helen Bilton, University of Reading

Outdoor learning benefits

- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Language development
- ✓ Social and emotional development
- ✓ Physical and mental wellbeing
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Concentration



“Taking the curriculum outside can improve attainment, increase engagement, and develop a wide range of skills including problem solving, communication, and resilience.”

Outdoor-learning.org



“Outdoor play is particularly beneficial during times of anxiety, stress, and adversity.”

Marguerite Hunter Blair and Anita Grant, chief executive, Play Scotland and chair of trustees, Play England



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Creating a safe environment


What makes a safe environment?

1. Adult supervision and guidance
2. Secured perimeters and access to indoors
3. Toys and equipment in good condition
4. Shelter from adverse weather conditions
5. Free from obstructions and hazards



“For many children, playing outdoors at their early years setting may be the only opportunity they have to play safely and freely.”

Council for Learning Outside the Classroom



“Access to outdoor play and learning should be an entitlement, not a privilege.”

Marguerite Hunter Blair and Anita Grant, chief executive, Play Scotland and chair of trustees, Play England



Many of our canopies come with a ten-year product, labour and installation guarantee, as standard.

Ideas for safe and engaging outdoor play areas

Schools and nurseries make space for outdoor learning to better incorporate it into the school week. Creating an area set up around outdoor play and learning makes it easier for staff and helps pupils get the most from their time outdoors.

We have been helping schools and nurseries to create their ideal outdoor classrooms for 30 years. See some examples of the outdoor play areas that have helped UK schools enhance the learning experience for their early years children.





If you'd like to get more from your outdoor space by creating shelter for outdoor play and learning, call our team on **01254 777 002** or email **info@canopiesuk.co.uk**

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