

No Child Left Inside!

Extending the Curriculum Outdoors



Playing is Learning!

DESCRIPTION:

Ask a child what their favorite part of the school day is and they will most likely say OUTSIDE! Open the door and turn your learning environment inside out. Discover how to maximize outdoor activities by moving interest centers outdoors, opening up new possibilities for stimulating children's creativity, self-discovery, and imagination. Share the wonders of nature and the environment with children even with limited outdoor spaces and resources.

OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Discuss the importance and beneficial effects of connecting children with nature, animals, the community, and caring for the Earth.
- Learn how to plan and implement outdoor learning center activities that sharpen children's cognitive abilities as well as build physical and social skills.
- Understand the value of unstructured outdoor play in promoting children's observation, exploration, experimentation in the natural environment.

BENEFIT TO CONFEREES & CHILDREN:

When outdoor learning centers are provided, children's involvement and learning opportunities are greatly expanded. In addition to practicing their gross motor skills, children can participate in a wide variety of other activities that involve art, science, math, literacy, social studies, and technology. Children also need to go outdoors to learn how the natural world works. When regular activities are done in a different setting, a new dimension is added to the experience that can promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children. The teacher's ability to structure the environment, allowing for the free flow of learning through play and to intervene verbally or with appropriate supplementary materials to extend the learning is the basis of an outdoor curriculum.

SUMMARY:

The outdoor playground or outside environment is a natural extension of the classroom. Children can do virtually anything outside that they do inside. The same learning centers children use indoors can be set up outdoors including arts and crafts, math and science experiences, reading and writing, building and other forms of construction. It seems that the outdoor area of the teacher's curriculum is the last to be planned, if it is planned at all. In this workshop, I hope to remind teachers of the innumerable natural and structured learning situations that can take place in the outside environment. Such environments should also help children understand and appreciate the natural world exploring worms and dirt and leaves and sticks and rocks and bugs, and the endless wondrous classroom that is the outdoors. If educators make the time to plan and implement a variety of engaging activities and change them frequently, they will see the children become more constructively involved during outside time. The outdoor area will become a challenging and stimulating environment for children of all levels and interests.

AUDIO/VISUAL:

Overhead projector for transparencies/screen
Power for iPod and speaker system
Wireless lavalier microphone

FORMAT:

Lecture/ Demonstration/ Involvement

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