

Reasons why nature is important

- **Nature boosts mental health-**
Depression and anxiety have risen. Nature lowers cortisol levels and boosts focus.
- **Promotes social interactivity-**
Pupils will problem solve and build on both language and social skills.





Reasons why nature is important

- **More vitamin D-** Spending time outdoors gives children more exposure to sunlight, this is great for bones, teeth and muscles.
- **Nature can restore attention -** If children are having trouble concentrating in a classroom, being outdoors can help restore their attention.
- **Encourages good physical health-** It supports sleep and toileting issues by supporting movement and fine and gross motor skills.

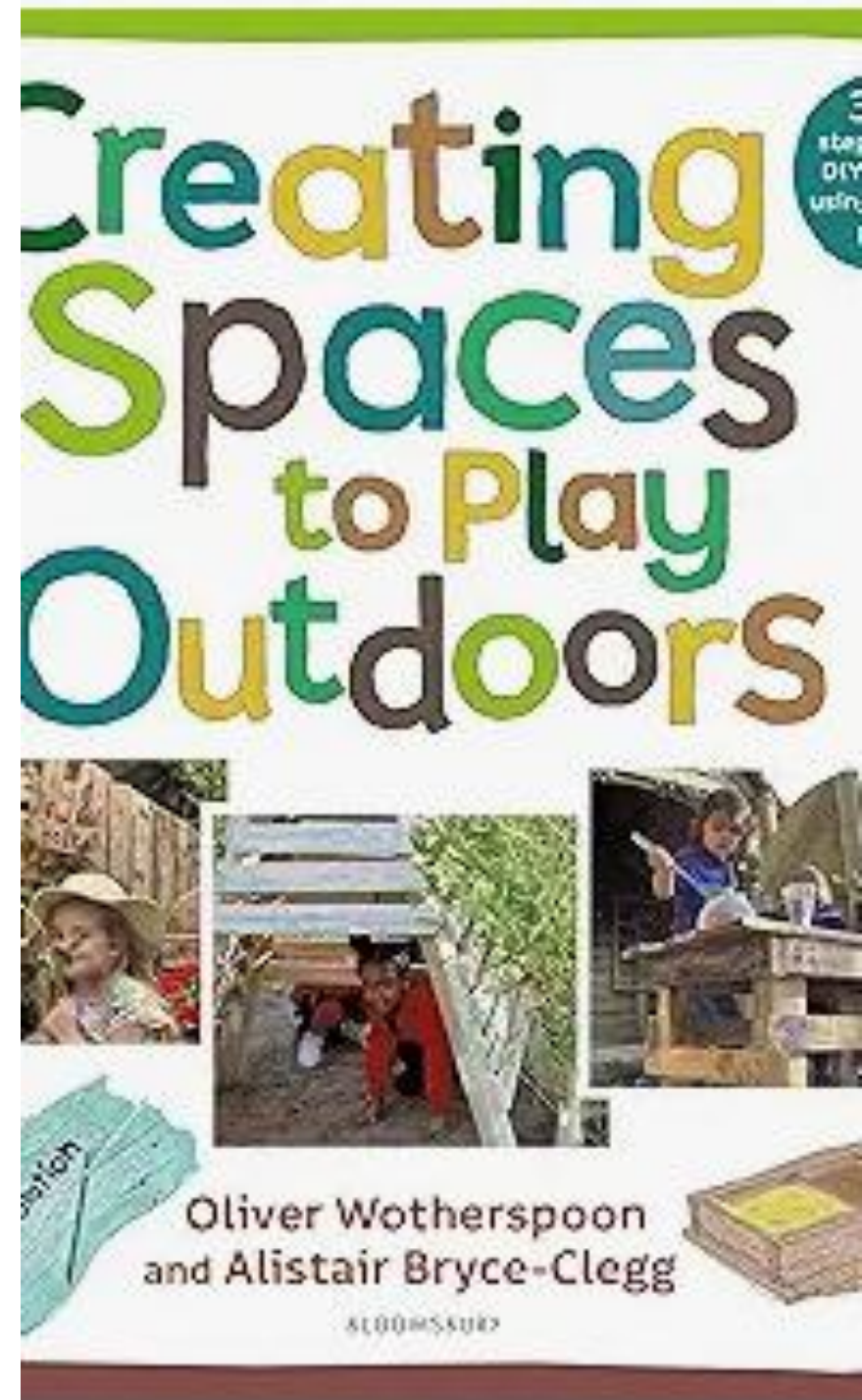
Alistair Bryce- Clegg

"When children step into the great outdoors, their creativity gets an epic boost. Rocks, stones and mud become the tools for their boundless imagination and playfulness. Outdoor spaces help children to unlock a secret treasure trove of fun and engagement, everyone a new adventure. With every outdoor escapade, children find fresh and exciting ways to turn ordinary objects into extraordinary delights."



Alistair Bryce- Clegg Nature ideas

- Potion making
- Leaf crowns
- Bird feeders
- Mud Kitchen
- Nature pictures
- Exploring
nature's colours
and textures



What does the
research tell
us ?

- **No Fear** – *Tim Gill*
- **Shrinking Freedom:** Over the past 30 years, children's freedom of action has significantly decreased due to growing adult control and supervision
- **Risk Aversion:** Society's tendency to eliminate risks in children's lives is based on perceived fears for their safety, which restricts their play and exploration.



What does the research tell us ?



- **Impact on Development:**

This risk aversion limits children's ability to develop resilience, self-reliance, and social skills.

The Importance of 'Risky Play'

"With risky play, we can thread risk and challenge into children's lives in a safe way. The things that they get from that include confidence, independence, resilience and problem-solving skills."

Risky play is a necessary part of children's development, says early years practitioner Gaynor Rice

Balancing Risks and Benefits in Outdoor Learning and Play

A briefing for teachers and practitioners
working with children



EMPTY
CLASSROOM
DAY

By Tim Gill

- **What gets in the way of a balanced approach**
 - Misplaced anxieties
 - Need for control
 - Messy
- **What does a balanced approach look like**
 - Think about risks and benefits
 - "Risk benefit assessment reminds us that as well as the legal requirements we should assess the likely benefits of the activity." – RoSPA (2013)

Risk Benefit Assessments

“Is it safe enough?”

Each area needs a written risk assessment.

- Benefits of playing with it
- What risks
- How we mitigate those risks?
- Explored with children



Crates for stacking, building, connecting, climbing.



Key Features

- Separate play policy. UN's Article 31 - Right to play.
- Developed a play charter with the children.
- Pumpkin competition to raise money for Forest school.
- Steering group that meet regularly (head, curriculum leader of play, lead playworker, governor, parent rep). Can you help?
- Action plan of when to introduce new areas. Already completed 😊

Creative play



Free play

Table clothes /floor mats make areas feel special

As much of the school grounds used all year round



List of Zones Seen (keeps changing)

- Tyres
- Crates
- Potion station
- Butterfly garden
- Den building
- Fairy gardens
- Bats and balls
- Lego, small world
- Dinosaurs
- Guttering
- Cars
- Natural objects
- Mud kitchen
- Sandpit
- Trim trail
- Climbing frame
- Messy café
- Boat
- Quiet area (under pods)
- Home corner
- Colouring
- Stage & music
- Wheeled toys (bikes, pushchairs, suitcases)

Your school

What are the strengths of your school site and current provision ?



Are there dead spaces that could be developed?

What are the restrictions?

What are the opportunities?

What are your priorities?

Why are fine and gross motor skills so important ?

National Child Development Outcomes (2024–2025)

The UK government tracks child development outcomes using the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3)** for children aged 2 to 2½ years. The five key areas assessed include:

- **Gross motor skills**
- **Fine motor skills**

According to the latest data figures represent a **decline** from the previous year, indicating a concerning trend



Encouraging Independence - Impact



- Create opportunities throughout break and lunchtimes for different responsibilities – serving lunch, clearing up!
- Allowing freedom in play leads to less bump notes and significantly less behaviour management incidents - use the tyres and climbing wall for heavy work
- Transition back into class after lunch is calm, no telling tales to the teacher or children feeling frustrated



Storage – Top Tips

- Storage areas next to each zone for quick set up and pack up.
- Time allocated to staff to set up
- Children support with packing up time
- Ensure waterproof
- Outdoor weather gear stored outside each classroom



Action Plan



Lots of areas wonderful areas with great potential.



Playground is used with areas that are available to all.



Forest area used but pupils could spot animals using aided language board on the outside- Marie sent aided language board to support this.



Outside area has beginnings of a great area- Nature areas and woodland areas need developing with signs that will withstand the weather [Park Community School | Design and Print](#)

Action Plan

What we need

- Pots and pans
- Wooden spoons
- Cooking utensils
- Guttering
- Pipes
- Plants – could you get some plants from the local garden centres



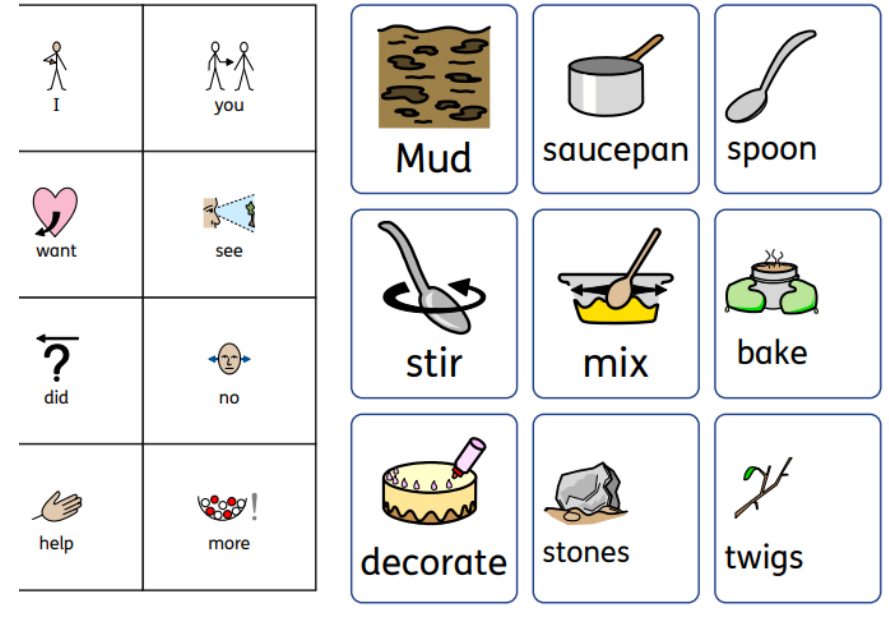
Actions

- Area needs to be defined but there are a good range of activities.
- Outside area - Nature trail to feature bird feeding station and planting area- There are planters that are not being used- these could be filled with woodchip and used as small world areas.
- Men's Shed can create a food stall. [Home | Andover Men's Shed](#)



Actions

- Marie Mullins to provide aided language boards and resources for outside – Mud kitchen, bird feeding activity, Planting activity, nature aided language boards, pond dipping activities and Buggingham palace.
- Car ramps and races – pupils mentioned cars and an easy solution to this would be painting strips of wood black and getting pupils to make ramps. They can write on the blackboard painted strips – STOP, GIVE WAY, EXIT and SLOW. Men's shed could create these for you [Home | Andover Men's Shed](#)



Our next steps



Forest School



Sensory Areas



Zoned areas



Safety

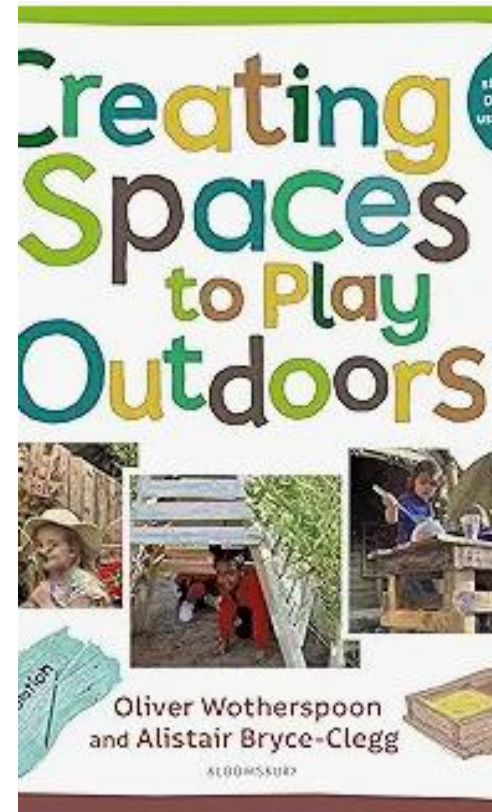
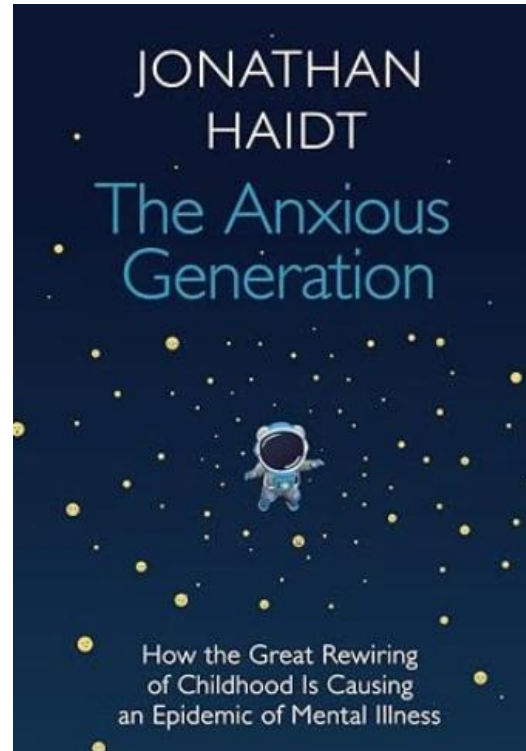
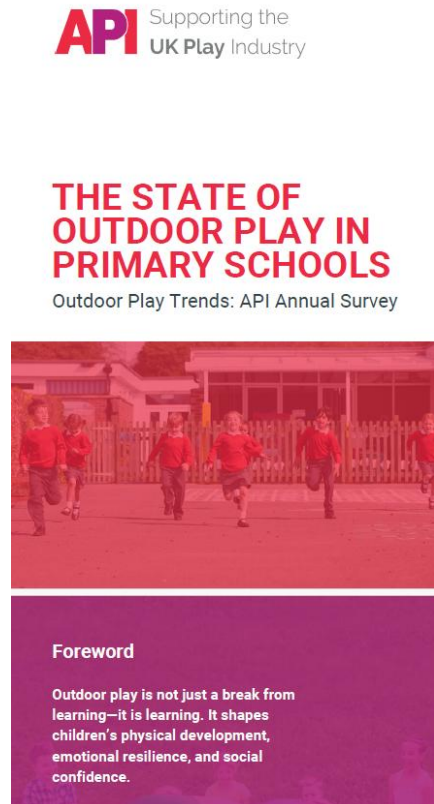


Calm Areas

What we
need from
the
community



Books you can read and information





How can you help?