

DESIGNING YOUR OUTDOOR LEARNING SPACE

Having a designated outdoor learning space will make the transition to outdoor learning smoother for both you and your children. Guidelines about outdoor learning can be set in this space so that children are aware of expectations each time they enter the outdoor learning space.

There are certainly some very fancy outdoor learning spaces around. Just have a look at some of the images below:



Outdoor learning spaces can be undercover (image source [here](#))



Outdoor learning spaces can have tables and chairs



Outdoor learning spaces can take place on existing infrastructure, under some trees or on the lawn

Typical outdoor learning spaces tend to incorporate seating and teaching platforms and a well-planned outdoor learning space will likely become an important part of your centre and can be used for many activities in every season. And while an outdoor learning space like one of those above may be something that your centre already has or would like to explore more in the future, it is not necessary for a successful outdoor learning experience.

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There is no standard design for an outdoor learning space; the key is to develop the space that will work best for your centre and the needs of your children.

But if designing and constructing a formal outdoor learning space is beyond your abilities in terms of time or funds, there is no need to miss out on great outdoor learning experiences.

Basic features of an outdoor learning space can include:

- **Seating** – You could choose to incorporate tables and chairs into your outdoor learning space so that children can simply transfer their indoor experience to the outdoors. Alternatively, you could ask children to sit on existing benches or on the ground.
- **Nature** – Your outdoor learning space doesn't need to be deep in the bush, surrounded by wild animals and waterfalls. It is simply enough to be outside, experiencing the sun, wind, smells and sounds of nature. Visual access to vegetation is also preferable but it doesn't need to be amazing.
- **Shade/Shelter** – If it's a fine day then sitting under a tree is fine. If it's rainy then sitting under some shelter is preferable. Other tips for managing hot and cold weather include:
 - Having a store of warm clothes (such as hats and scarves)
 - Having a store of sun hats
 - Access to sunscreen
 - Encouraging appropriate clothing and footwear
- **Equipment** – Depending on the activity, usual equipment is all you will need. All the activities in the Outdoor Learning unit are designed to be taken outside easily.

