

TIPS FOR MAKING OUTDOOR LEARNING EASIER

Transitioning to an outdoor learning space may seem daunting. The tips below have been designed to make this transition smoother.

- **Set expectations before going outside** – Understanding what is happening and why will help children relax. Ensuring that all children are aware of what is expected of them and of the guidelines to outdoor learning will make the transition to outdoor learning much easier for all.

Be prepared - What essentials will you need outside? Consider hats, sunscreen, warm clothes, a First Aid kit, full water bottles, camera etc.



- **Watch the weather** - The weather affects our ability to learn in multiple ways. Wet, windy or wild weather will affect attention spans so adjust your plans accordingly. Likewise, avoid standing with your back to the sun when talking to children: they will be squinting to see you and probably missing important information in the process.
- **Keep it simple** - Some children can find it hard to listen to someone talking for a long period of time, especially outside. If long stretches of talking are necessary, consider breaking it up between indoor and outdoor time and have a clear plan about what you will do outdoors when you get there.
- **Bring it together at the beginning and the end** - Being outside has the risk of feeling dispersed. Consider bringing all the children together in a circle (or another shape/format) at the beginning and end of the activity. This is a good way of holding everyone's attention at once.
- **Sharing the space** - If you're unsure or nervous about taking your class outside, find out if there's another educator who would also like to head outside at the same time and share the experience (including the struggles, risks and rewards).
- **Set up a base** - Designate an area as your base or outdoor learning space. Tell children by the time you count back from 10 they should all be back on base ready to listen to you.
- **Bugs alert!** - Give the children a warning that there are insects outdoors. Some fly. Some crawl. Some bite. Children should try to respect them and not fear them (although make sure you know if any of your kids are allergic to bees, ants, or wasps.)
- **Be flexible** - Be aware that children are making discoveries of their own and may get distracted from what you intend to teach.