

Outside and the natural environment

Being outside provides endless opportunities for babies to explore, develop socially, emotionally and physically and encourages communication and language skills. Babies should have daily access to the outdoors. Every type of play can happen outdoors. No outdoor space? Make the most of the local environment and use nature as a resource.

experiences that stimulate all my senses. What can I see, touch, taste, smell?

a space where I can play alone, or just sit and watch what's going on around me.

interesting things to look at from a horizontal and vertical position such as leaves swaying in a tree, hanging ribbons & CD's.

daily opportunities to explore outside. Remember this might be the only time in the day that I get to go outside.



feeling of breeze on my face, watching movement of branches on trees, light flickering through leaves and hearing the different sounds of the outdoors.

space and equipment that support movement with things to pull up on, climb over, under and along, push, carry, dig, ride along and role.

prodding, patting, squeezing, poking different materials and using tools when I am ready.

explore different materials such as grass, soil, sand, mud, water with my hands and feet.

Role of the adult

Offer a designated space that support babies developing needs and interests with tactile resources that enable babies to use all their senses to play and explore, and equipment that supports movement and offers challenge appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Babies should have daily opportunities to be outside where they can engage, explore and challenge their developing gross motor skills, and be exposed to sensory exploration. This doesn't happen when they are strapped in a buggy.

What do your babies like doing? What schemas are they beginning to display? What resources can you provide that support emerging schematic play?

Consider moving some care routines to outside such as sleeping under trees and moving high-chairs outside for meal times?

Interact with your babies. Notice how babies communicate with you through smiles, waves, cries, facial expressions, body movement and eye contact. Place yourself at your baby's level and look around to see what they may be seeing.