

SUGGESTED EXERCISES

Observing children being in touch with nature



Video: Smelling a flower

OBJECTIVES

- Promoting a healthy lifestyle for children.
- Promoting children's holistic development.
- Organizing the educational environment.
- Assessing educational quality.

ACTIVITY DETAILS

Approximate duration: 3 hrs



STEP 1

1.1 As an ice-breaker activity, use the sheet titled “49 things to do before the age of 5,” and circle everything you did before the age of 5.

STEP 2

2.1 Share your answers with the group and discuss together the significance of being in touch with nature in your childhood. Provide arguments in favour of children having regular contact with nature.

STEP 3

3.1 Watch the video clip as a group or individually.

STEP 4

4.1 As a group, discuss and identify what elements should be included in the design of a playground to allow children to be in touch with nature.

STEP 5

5.1 Fill out the table below by answering the following questions.



**ARE THE FOLLOWING RIGHT OR WRONG REASONS TO AVOID PLAYING OUTSIDE?
EXPLAIN WHY.**

Considerations when deciding to allow outside play or not	Determine whether these are Right or Wrong reasons to avoid playing outside and explain why.	
	Reason	Explanation
The children's clothes are not suitable for messy activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
The children's clothes are not suitable for the winter cold.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
The adults' clothes are not suitable for messy activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
The adults' clothes are not suitable for the winter cold.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
It's raining.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
Two educators must accompany the children when leaving the school or childcare centre grounds.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
I don't like winter.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
Getting everyone dressed is tiring.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	



Considerations when deciding to allow outside play or not	Determine whether these are Right or Wrong reasons to avoid playing outside and explain why.	
	Reason	Explanation
Children see playing outside as a punishment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
The playground is not adequately laid out.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
The urban setting is inappropriate and dangerous.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
Getting all the little ones dressed is too time-consuming.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
Some parents don't authorize outside play.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
It's hot.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
There's too much snow.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
Crossing the street is too dangerous.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	
The playground is too far from the childcare centre.	<input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong	



STEP 6

6.1 Share your answers with the group.

6.2 Take your reflection further by answering the following questions:

- Did you learn any new concepts during this activity? If so, which ones?
- Considering what you have learned, are there any answers you would like to change in the table above?

STEP 7

7.1 As a group, continue the discussion by answering the following questions:

- Why do you think some educators are still not naturally inclined to encourage outside play?
- What has changed since your childhood to encourage a preference towards inside play?
- If you were a child in the playground seen in the video clip, what natural elements would you like to see?
- Why do you think this child is playing with a flower instead of toys from the playground?

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED EXERCISES

- Build a playground model whose layout includes natural elements only.



APPENDIX 1 : 49 Things to Do Before You're 5 years old

1. Run around in the rain
2. Play hide-and-seek in a garden
3. Lie on your back and watch the clouds
4. Pick fruit from a tree and eat it
5. Go for a hike in the forest
6. Jump in a pile of leaves
7. Build a sandcastle with mud
8. Hang from a low branch, then drop
9. Make a collection of leaves and feathers
10. Climb a steep slope on your hands and knees
11. Watch a sunrise or sunset
12. Play with mud
13. Explore a garden with a magnifying glass
14. Float a leaf on a pond or stream
15. Listen to a storm and watch for lightning
16. Chase your shadow
17. Search for tadpoles in a creek
18. Build a treehouse
19. Draw with a stick in the dirt
20. Grow some herbs and vegetables
21. Visit a farm
22. Sit around a campfire and roast marshmallows
23. Dig holes in the ground
24. Listen to the birds and imitate their song
25. Catch some bugs, then release them
26. Search for shells at the beach
27. Invent your own obstacle course using rocks and branches
28. Blow on a dandelion flower and make a wish
29. Sit quietly and watch bugs moving
30. Water some plants with a watering can
31. Have a picnic under a big tree
32. Jump in a puddle
33. Chase butterflies around the garden



34. Play with a ball at the beach
35. Paddle at the beach or a backyard wading pool
36. Play shop under a tree with pinecones and leaves
37. Visit a botanical garden
38. Balance along a log or some stepping stones
39. Go for a night walk with a flashlight in the garden
40. Climb a big hill and look at the view
41. Explore a rock pool or create your own
42. Have story time outside on a rug
43. Catch rain on your tongue
44. Sprout some fast-growing seeds
45. Play peek-a-boo from behind a tree
46. Ride a trike or scooter to the park
47. Roll down a grassy hill
48. Pick flowers for someone you love
49. Count the stars at dusk

Reference: Adapted with permission from ©Nature Play South Australia, 49 Things to Do Before You're 5, Retrieved from <https://natureplaysa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Nature-Play-Downloads-49-Things-to-do-before-youre-5.pdf>

