

Childminding Environment

Indoor Environment

Endless possibilities supplied by children: Accessibility supplied by childminder Holly Graham

Utilise a wall space, whether a designated area or an empty wall space where photos can be displayed of the children at play or in familiar situations. Children like to be able to go back and re-visit what they have done and this provides communication and language opportunities between themselves, with themselves and with you. Simple text can be added, taken from the child's view of what they were doing.



A storage system that allows children to choose what they want to play with and put back when they have finished. Text on the front, with pictures, allows children to make connections as well as select what they want to play with.



Having photos of the children with their favourite toy or activity values the choices they make and provides language opportunities as well as promoting inclusion. Using a line with pegs means children can have more ownership by moving them around, and adding other pictures. It also looks more fun!





Sticking posters/pictures onto a patio door at child height makes it safe [as children know when the door is closed] and provides another display surface.

My aim is to provide a relaxed home from home surrounding where each child is given support to reach their full potential. I provide a stimulating child-initiated and adult-guided environment with a large range of resources which are freely accessible to all children presented in a picture/print learning environment which promotes their independence.



Creativity supplied by children: Supporting environment supplied by Jean, Jemma & David Kemp



The one thing that children love more than anything is a cardboard box, the larger the better! Allow their imagination to run and follow their lead. A cosy den, or a place to hide, a car or rocket or a tunnel. Support children by allowing them to choose their own props, cushions, blankets and materials from around the house. Let them personalise it with paint or colored paper. Help cut holes for windows. The children will have many wonderful ideas.

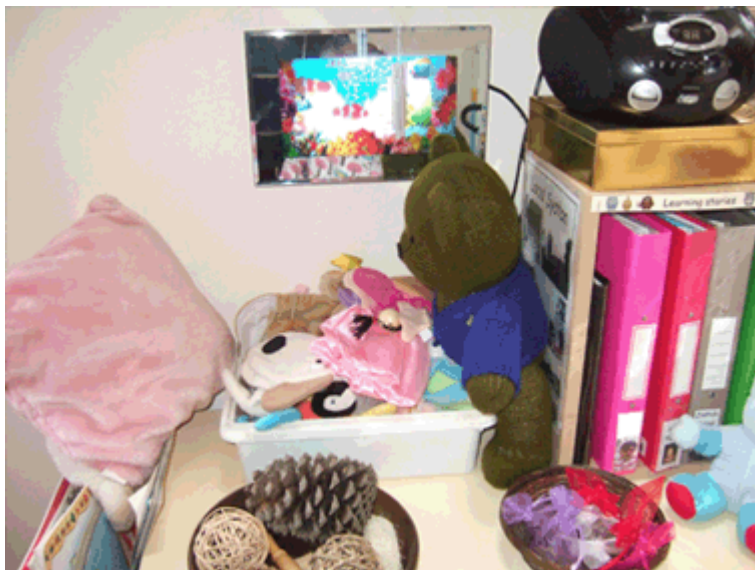
A simple blanket and a few scatter cushions have so many uses, a swimming pool where a young child gains confidence showing his peers what he has to do in his swimming lessons.

A pond full of lily pads to jump onto, counting as we jump.

Cushions are carried everywhere, helping to create cosy places in den's indoors and out. The blanket becomes a hammock between two chairs.



Curiosity supplied by children: Organisation supplied by childminder Adell Mason



This is a small space, above low level storage units, and one which I think of as the little PSED space. There is a selection of glove puppets which support role-play and are particularly useful for exploring feelings and emotions. Close by, a mirror sits with the words 'How I feel today'.

The soft light and rhythmic movement of a sensory artificial aquarium promotes calming moods. A photo album sits next to the children's Learning Journey folders, so that the children may access photos of family and home whenever they choose. This is also the place for 'Albert Bear', a friend to the children who sometimes accompanies them home with his travel diary. Treasure baskets (natural wood and fragrant herb sachets) promote the children's understanding of the natural world ...

... and a collection of PSED books are displayed in a wall mounted rack (e.g. making friends; using a potty; waiting for baby; starting pre-school, etc).



Natural wicker baskets are housed in a unit specially created to make use of a tiny space in the corner of my hallway. The baskets display a photo of each child attending the setting, who may then use the basket to put their own choice of special items from home, such as a snuggle cloth, favourite toy, or other soothers and comforters.

This makes for an excellent transition strategy as it supports the child to develop a sense of ownership and an understanding that they are valued important members in my home. Below the unit, there sits a box for shoes which promotes a clean and safe environment. The box is labelled with both printed text and an appropriate illustration to support understanding for young children and those with English as an additional language.



Outdoor Environment

Intrigue supplied by children: resources and equipment supplied by childminder Claire Morris



My setting is made up of a shed / playroom which have all the children's work decorating it. This room then leads onto a gazebo which enables the children to play outside when it's raining or when we have our summers and it's too hot. The children also have access to different dedicated areas of the garden such as the lawn area where we tend to play with balls or in tents, the patio area has a wide and varied supply of sit on toys and the gardening area where we grow our fruit and vegetables as well as play with the mud.



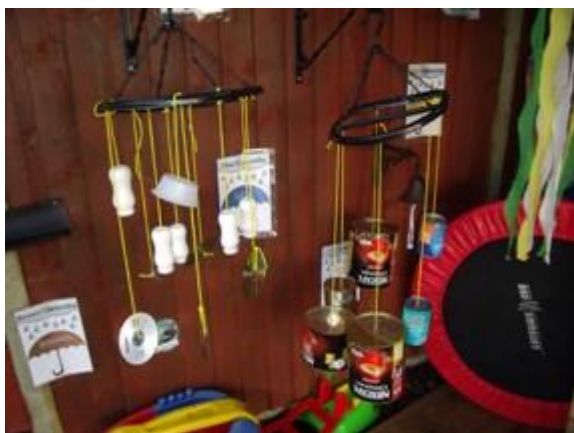


The children's areas are all decorated with bunting, windmills, kites and chimes which make it colourful and inviting. This encourages the child into the environment and perhaps is the reason why most of the children don't want to leave. The children have free access to all areas and resources and to help them find them they are all labelled with both words and pictures.



I have a dedicated messy area within the shed so that we can paint and play with water without worrying. The other side of the shed is carpet so that the children can lie and roll around comfortable. I have also put pictures and mirrors around the shed, even on the ceiling, for the children to interact with. Every now and again you will catch a child pulling faces at themselves in the mirror which can be entertaining.





To encourage independence from a young age things are placed at their height such as aprons, toys books, pens etc. I also place strange things around the setting to encourage play such as keys, locks, tin cans for them to bang.

To have spontaneous learning I have placed curtain hoops, balls on elastic so that we can look at colours, numbers, knotting, springs, adding ribbons etc. You could hang up brass numbers or letters to be a talking point.



We have tortoises which have a special area in the house and the garden, providing a great talking point for the children and providing an opportunity for them to care for animals. Around the setting I have laminated name cards of animals that can be found in the garden so that the children can find them. I also laminated all the birds with their names so that when we are looking out of the conservatory the children can name them. When we are based in the house the children have access to a small selection of toys which i borrow from the toy library. This gives the children different toys to play with. I also have a big magnetic white board which the children are always drawing on and sticking magnets to. This is a brilliant way of mark marking and is also used by all ages.





The setting does have a lot of steps which all my children learn to get use to but to encourage independence, and also because they find it more exciting, I dismantled a slide and use this as a way of getting down the steps. The children love it. They also roll cars, balls and dolls down it as well as the draining pipes I have installed at the back of the gazebo.

The one thing that was missing out of my garden was music so a theme during the school holidays was to make a music area for the children to experiment and make lots of noise. The children helped make our music mobiles and even when not in use they can be heard banging against each other.



Imagination supplied by children: Ideas supplied by Jean, Jemma & David Kemp

Children are fascinated by wildlife. Making a bug hotel is simple and costs nothing. We had fun gathering resources in a wicker basket, pine cones, wood and twigs from the hedgerows taking care not to damage living things. We used old slates, bricks and wood that no one wanted. The children worked together as a team to build and rebuild their hotel. The younger ones putting forward their ideas with enthusiasm. They chose to make a label for their hotel and rushed out every morning to see what new guests had arrived.



This is our 'trademark', When we began to develop our outdoor pedagogy we found we were outdoors for the majority of the day and wellies caused immense problem.

We had looked at various forms of welly storage which we loved but came at a very high cost. A tub full of soil with a few robust sticks outside the front and back doors provided a fantastic, bright and attractive solution to our problem much to the delight of parents and children.

Quiet time after an active morning in the sunshine.

The children discovered a piece of chicken wire in the garden, actually it was once the front of a rabbit hutch. They raided the fabric bag and found remnants of ribbon, material and binding.

They happily worked together to thread and knot their ribbon. 'Can we hang it in the tree?' asks one child. We are very proud of our garden artwork.

Children enjoy creating their own work, remember to value and give praise for their creations



Adventure supplied by children: Materials supplied by childminder Pam Bunney

No block paving, decking or astroturf here!

I believe the outdoors has more learning opportunities than indoors. We play outside in all weathers.

Before I could start childminding I had to fence an elevated part of the garden to prevent children falling. I felt disappointed, as my large garden had a very natural style and flow, thinking formal fencing looked out of place, but it had to be done

How my attitude changed once it had been erected; such a resourceful feature for the children.

We hang a painting/chalk board, wind chimes, numerals, and a mirror (not glass by the way). The railings can be used for threading and weaving and the ledge can be used for small world play, and displaying topical articles' and natural materials



Jelly moulds with water to freeze over night.





What is more natural and resourceful than SNOW! Mark making:- squirting warm water in squidgy bottles, which also keeps little hands warm.

Creating imaginative places with logs, canes and loose parts (Junk). These can be quiet places for children or a place for communication and creative expression.



Characteristics of Effective Learning.

A children's allotment covers all areas of learning and links into so many rhymes and storybooks like Bunnykins and Appletree farm.

Making a real dingle dangle scarecrow from the children's old clothes is fun and promotes

Expressive arts and design: Exploring and using media and materials.

Dinosaurs and farm yard small world toys seem to like mud and snow.

Picture signs, displaying what grows where or information about any pets or wildlife that may be in the garden, older children can help to research the information and make these signs.





Loose parts play. (I call it our junk yard), for gross imaginative construction. All sorts of things from bread baskets to pipe work, assorted lengths of rope, material, oven racks and wood.

Creating and Thinking Critically. We also have piles of natural materials for exploring textures and density, expressing artistic flair or sequencing, counting and comparing. Stones, shells, fur cones, twigs, old cork or wooden table mats, wool and feathers. **Junk can be the most valuable resource and what's more it's free! Recycle.**



Spells supplied by children: Imaginitive learning supplied by childminder Adell Mason



The idea of a “witches cave” is child initiated, and over the course of a few weeks, inexpensive resources have been added to this enclosed little den, (so important for personal, social and emotional development). Natural (trees) and existing resources are used including used army netting (purchased online) along with ‘Halloween’ resources (rubber bats, rats, witches costume etc) from my top cupboard, as well as the children’s own drawings. The children are provided with a bucket, which they use to collect natural resources from the garden as ingredients for spells, such as mud, water, leaves, stones, shells, sticks and pebbles, thus promoting the exploration of the natural world. Creative language is observed “Diddy Diddy Whoosh!” as the 'potion' is mixed, and the development of imagination is supported as the children decide what they are going to turn me into next! Croak croak!
