

Outdoor Learning in Aberdeen City

High quality ELC provision and improved outcomes for children are the major drivers behind the expansion of hours. National guidance and pedagogical research identifies outdoor learning as a means of achieving this, with Aberdeen City placing outdoor play and practice at the forefront of their ELC provision.

The city is very lucky to have such a vast range of natural spaces for our children to explore, as well as skilled practitioners who are passionate in driving outdoor learning forwards, providing the best experiences for children and engaging with their community.

A key group of ELC staff in Aberdeen, consisting of practitioners across settings, has been formed to promote a community of outdoor practice, where they have collaborated on outdoor initiatives and training, as well as local and international study visits to settings.

We are very much looking forward to the opening of our new nurseries at **Duthie Park** and **Hazlehead Park**. Both will have an outdoor focus in their pedagogy and provision, but each will offer unique and varied experiences for children, families, staff and wider communities.



DUTHIE PARK

Open to eligible 2 year olds and all 3 & 4 year olds
8am-6pm (46 week model)

HAZLEHEAD PARK

Open to all 3 & 4 year olds
9am-3pm (term-time model)

Why should I choose an outdoor nursery for my child?

Outdoor learning has been pioneered for many years throughout the UK and Europe, with outdoor Early Learning and Childcare settings being an increasingly popular choice for children and their families. A wealth of scientific and educational research has been conducted into the benefits of outdoor learning, centred around the positive impact it has on a child's wellbeing, physical and cognitive development.



Do staff need additional qualifications?

Staff will have the same qualifications as their colleagues within other nurseries. However, practitioners will seek to engage in specialist outdoor education and skills training as part of their Continuous Professional Development. This will enable them to further develop their capacity in this area and improve learning outcomes for children.

What would an outdoor session look like?

For an insight into the world of an outdoor nursery through the eyes and experiences of children and families, please see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=b01cgoM-RKA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=KkpEajokull>



Are the standards the same as an indoor nursery?

Outdoor ELC settings are run in alignment with national curriculum guidance, health and safety documentation and policies. This ensures that children receive high quality, challenging learning experiences, in a safe and nurturing environment, facilitated and scaffolded by highly trained practitioners.

Many studies have demonstrated that children involved in long-term **outdoor learning programmes significantly increase their success in learning processes and outcomes in their future schooling and adult lives.**

The time and space that nature allows children to develop their emotions, motor development and thinking skills in the Early Years, has particular correlation with improved resilience, writing skills, motivation and focus throughout education.

ELC staff who work in an outdoor setting follow the same approach as in other ELC provisions, only within a natural learning space. Practitioners plan, observe and adapt sessions to respond to children's interests and the ever-changing environment.

They ensure coverage of all curricular areas, while also building on children's knowledge, skills and confidence.



The best classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky! Margaret McMillan

Through outdoor play we can...

- ... be adventurers through the space to run, obstacles to climb, swing and jump from.
- ... be a storyteller through imaginative play.
- ... be a writer with sticks, mud and water.
- ... be a confident communicator using the rich language our environment promotes.
- ... be a mathematician in den-building.
- ... be a designer through transient art.
- ... be a scientist investigating creatures and plants.
- ... be a technician in creating bridges over puddles.
- ... be a historian of the local area.
- ... be a good friend.
- ... be a resilient individual.
- ... be a creative and solution-focused learner.
- ... be a responsible citizen of our world.

