



The out-of-doors is a wonderful, expansive space for children to explore their surroundings. Teachers can use this space as an extension of their own classroom. The learning does not stop when you leave your classroom—teachers should plan, observe and scaffold daily curriculum in the out-of-doors. Here are some practical ways to bring engage children outside your classroom.

Art:

Shadow Shapes: have one child trace a child's shadow onto paper or the sidewalk

Science:

Paper Airplanes: Study airplane design and create and decorate your own paper airplanes. Then have an paper airplane flight day!

Large Motor:

Hopscotch: add numbers or letters to the box for letter and number recognition skills

Human Machine: create a large machine (like a car) adding each child as a part (like the left tire, horn, steering wheel, etc)

Tips for setting up your outside environment:

- Increase your use of water— hoses, water tables, sprinklers, spray bottles, etc.
- Improve your outdoor art— easels, chalk, big paint brushes, etc.
 - Use natural materials— sand, pods, driftwood, larger stones, mud pits, etc.
- Plant herbs everywhere— creating smells!
- Create “soundscapes”- wind chimes in trees, listening cones, hide bells in plants, etc.
- Involve the children in dreaming up the environment— let their curiosity lead you!

...But how do I use the assessment cycle outside?

Some children “come alive” when they are out-of-doors. Do you have a child who acts completely different on the playground when they interact with others than they do inside the classroom? This is the perfect opportunity to take your assessment tool outside— feel free to assess for EI’s outside whether they are on a portfolio or a quick check sheet. Remember authentic observations are collected when and where the child feels most comfortable.