

Outdoor play

Use the images of outdoor play equipment on this colourful poster as a starting-point for discussion about outdoor play

Activities across the curriculum

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Look at the image of the children on a see-saw and talk about the importance of sharing. Is it possible to play on a see-saw by yourself? Why not? Talk about other outdoor resources that involve sharing such as throwing a ball to a friend or pulling someone along in a wagon.
- Cut out a circle of card, large enough to cover a poster image. Explain that you would like the children to close their eyes while you cover a toy on the poster with the card. Ask them to open their eyes and say what you have covered up. Do the same by removing real objects from a selection of toys in your outdoor area.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- Extend the children's awareness of initial letter sounds by asking questions, for example, 'How many items can you find starting with the sound 's'? Point to the actual letters at the start of the words as you say the sounds. Challenge the children further by asking them to think of different words starting with the same sounds as 'chalks' and 'tricycle'.
- Read the labels beside the poster images, clapping the syllables as you do so, for example, 'ball' – one clap, 'bucket and spade' – four claps. Extend to clapping syllables of other play equipment.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

- Count the number of skittles and the balls beside them. How many skittles can each child knock down using two balls? Keep a tally of individual results and note whether the children improve with practise.
- Explore the image of the bucket and spade with the children. Is the bucket empty or full? What might the spade be used for? Let the children take buckets and spades to an outdoor sandpit to investigate filling and emptying.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Look at the image of the tricycle and name the different parts such as pedals, wheels, handlebars and seat. Talk about the purpose of the pedals. Explore other wheeled outdoor vehicles to discover how they move along.
- Talk about how outdoor play equipment is designed to be strong, safe and waterproof. Make a list of the materials that the items on the poster are made from. What is the most common? Explain that plastic is ideal as it is waterproof and moulded so it does not have sharp edges. Leave a plastic item, some rope and chalk in the rain and observe what happens to them.



Using the poster

Create an interactive display adjacent to the access to your outdoor area. Ensure that it is low so that parents and children can share the content together. Mount the poster and surround it with photographs of the children enjoying their favourite outdoor activities. Write appropriate captions dictated by the children. Include brief adult information about learning and development in the outdoor environment.

Physical Development

- Ask the children to name the poster items and, if possible, set out the same items outdoors for them to explore. Return to the poster and talk about which items they most enjoyed playing with and why.
- Identify the colours of the chalks on the poster. Ask how the children would use them outdoors, for example, drawing on the ground, making rubbings or creating observational drawings on paper. Take the children outdoors and let them try out their suggestions.

Creative Development

- Look at the image of the two children on the see-saw. Encourage the children to make up a short story about playing with some of the items on the poster. Invite the children to take turns to play the part of the characters. Provide appropriate props for the children to act out their scenario outdoors.
- Draw the children's attention to the swirly pattern on the ball in the poster. Provide large circles of paper, some squeeze paint and salad spinners for the children to experiment with painting swirly balls.

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