



CLASS OUTDOOR TIPS

Children feel connected when they have a warm, supportive relationships with teachers. Outdoor playtime is a perfect time to share smiles, laughter and enthusiastically enjoy interacting with the children in your class.

Ideas to engage with children outdoors while meeting the dimensions of CLASS.

Emotional Support: Positive Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Student Perspectives.

- Join the fun! Invite children to play a game: teach children how to chalk out an outline for games like hopscotch, long jump, or create an obstacle course.
- Let's Play Ball! – play games like catch and other non-competitive games that promote positive peer interactions.
- Offer encouragement and specific feedback as children play: "I can see the two of you really enjoy playing together." "That was kind of you to let Dylan have a turn on the swing."
- Be sure to have enough activities for children to participate in play. Have more than just one ball, ride along toy or piece of chalk.
- Bumps and bruises can happen easily on a playground. Provide comfort to a child that may fall or gets hurt. Acknowledge children's emotions: "It looks like you're sad that you haven't had a turn with the scooter yet."
- Notice if a child is left out of play and encourage a game where all can participate. Assist children who may struggle when wanting the same toy or activity and help them find solutions.
- Playtime is a perfect time to follow a child's lead. Ask them what game **they** want to play.
- Give students outside jobs (opening and closing gates, checking the playground before leaving, etc.)
- Outdoor playtime is a great time for gross motor development. Offer a play space or equipment that allows them to move freely. Let them jump, run, crawl, spin.
- Playtime should be free choice time, not all children need to play the same game at the same time. For example, the class is going to play duck, duck, goose but you also have sidewalk chalk out for children who decide not to play.

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Classroom “Playground” Organization:

Behavior Management, Productivity, Instructional Learning Format.

- Set clear expectations with students for safe play prior to going out to the playground. You can use a picture of a slide during circle time to explain safe rules like “The slide is only for going down.” “Only one person on a swing at a time.” “Let a teacher know if you need to go inside to use the bathroom.”
- When not engaged with a child(ren) stand where you can have a full view of the playground to monitor the safety and needs of the children.
- Redirect children behavior when needed: “Sarah is using the water table, but you can stand on the other side and play with her.”
- Offer positive feedback to children paying peacefully.
- Be sure that children have access to playground toys and activities that are not broken or missing pieces.
- The same way you have inside centers you can have outdoor centers. An outdoor kitchen is a fun way to practice eye-hand coordination while pouring water. Have a variety of inside activities that they can use during outdoor play.
- Stay organized and ready for fun: Have a basket or bin of items ready to go outside like chalk, bubbles, parachute, etc.
- Notice what interests the children. Did they find a caterpillar in the garden or spot a nest in a tree. Ask questions and engage students in a conversation about what they found.
- Get involved: Ask if you can play too and what role they can assign you. Will you be the mommy or the baby? Are you the chef or customer?
- Summarize their play: “I’m the customer and you rang up my order on your cash register.”

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Instructional Support: Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, Language Modeling

- If the children are playing restaurant link concepts to similar activities from the classroom or from real life scenarios previously discussed. "Is this like the restaurant Lily went to on her birthday, she said it was fancy."
- Challenge the children to think about the whys and how. You can ask them "Why do you think the tree is so tall?" or "Why do you think we can hear the birds so well? How do you think they communicate?"
- Ask questions: "Have you been to a park? Have you been to a park with a playground like ours?"
- Integrate previous knowledge "Remember when we read The Hungry Caterpillar, do you think we will see any of caterpillars or butterflies in the garden?"
- Bring unexpected items outdoors like pots and pans to play restaurant or magnifying glasses and binoculars to explore and investigate the natural environment.
- Pretend play offers many opportunities to engage children in back-and-forth conversations, ask follow-up questions, and offer hints and clarification to a child's understanding of concepts. "I see you blowing on the food, is it hot?" "What happens if it stays in the oven for too long?" or "Why do you think the worms go under the dirt?"
- Expand, connect, and introduce new vocabulary while playing: "This meal is delicious, what ingredients did you use?" or "The caterpillar is making his chrysalis what do you think he will do in there?"
- Use self-talk: "This soup is delicious; I can really taste the celery and onions." "Looking at the butterflies makes me feel peaceful."
- Encourage children to talk to one another: "Can you take his order? Now tell the chef what to cook."

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Tips for supporting children during specials:

PE, Art, Music, etc.

- Sit with them as they do whatever the special is – say things like “I’m having so much fun watching all of you play your instruments.”
- Encourage respect by calling the specials teachers by name “Coach Hanna, Mrs. Keller, etc.” rather than just art teacher or coach.
- Be aware of students who may have difficulties and plan accordingly. For example, provide headphones for music class for a student who has a volume sensitivity.
- Jump in and provide support where needed. For example, the art teacher is helping a child apply glue to a piece of paper and you notice a child using scissors upside down struggling to cut out shapes. Help the struggling child learn how to hold the scissors correctly.
- Don’t force children to sit a certain way – some children learn through fidgeting as long as they are safe allow them to move.
- Explain what the special is and why it is important for them to do or learn. Encourage students to listen and participate.
- Teach responsibility by showing children how to properly clean up art projects or put materials away. Children are going to PE and the teacher encourages everyone to bring their water bottle and carry it themselves.
- Review expectations for walking in the hallway before leaving the classroom. Walk around and monitor students and use gentle cues (a gentle touch or a whisper) to help students focus or correct their behavior.
- Have something to keep students busy while waiting, sing a song, tell a story or read-aloud.
- Specials teachers use of materials counts too! For example, while in PE the coaches use a variety of balls in varied sizes, shapes, and textures, and hula hoops to engage children in an activity to increase hand-eye coordination.
- Ask open ended questions: “What do you think will happen in music class?” “Which one is bigger/louder, etc.” “What other things can make this sound?” “Can you tell me about the colors you used in your painting?” “What does clay feel like?”

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