



Engaging school
communities in
transforming outdoor
learning and play

NOTES from workshop

Creating Opportunities to Problem Solve – outdoors

10/11/15 @Beaumanor

This is a record of the ideas shared by participants and the actions everyone undertook to carry out following the workshop.



LTL
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professional

“Notes to yourself” This is a list of all the participants key actions that they planned to take after the Problem Solving workshop. (duplicates removed). I hope you all find that this a useful ‘aide memoir for everyone’.

- Have a plan for development of problem solving outdoors.
- Draw up a term of ‘ideas to do each week’.
- Get children to think about solutions to problems instead of setting things up all the time.
- Provide more opportunities to solve real problems, eg moving soil or large plants.
- We shall use the outdoors more effectively.
- Make it more fun!
- Find more natural building materials, variety of logs, logs cut at different angles, slices of log, large branches (environment agency/local tree surgeons)
- Scrap wood and construction materials(local builder)
- Make a natural area in our tarmac garden.
- Sponge sanding blocks + safety goggles.
- Use Risk/benefit assessment ie allow children to take more ‘risk’ and think about the benefit too.
- Green tarpaulin
- Glass Clear tarpaulin
- Cargo nets
- Use all senses outside.
- 3D shapes from canes
- Measuring with string
- Support maths and literacy outdoors using loose parts.
- Make a collection of resources for practical activities.
- Take children into the local area (parks, woodland) to gather natural materials for our garden.
- Collect wooden curtain rings, keys and other items to stimulate thinking.
- Sorting a range of materials, using weight, magnets, textures etc.
- Think about schemas
- Ping pong balls and golf balls + squeeze bottle to blow (or squirt water) to move them around.
- Balls or cars in gutter pipes(higher/lower/faster/slower etc)
- Use more natural and open ended resources and free exploration.
- Construction with wider range of ‘unpredictable’ materials to test their ideas.
- Ropes/pulleys/bucket (the one we used was from a boat chandlery, strong rubber with integral rope – more robust than plastic buckets)

'Best problem solving ideas' ...as shared by participants at the beginning of the workshop session (duplicates removed – most scribed verbatim)

- Move water from one tray to another using funnels, containers, wheels,
- Sand pit/transferring quantities, use of scales, weight/ volume
- Move small balls from a pool to the other side of the garden using pots and trolleys
- Obstacle courses/beams to travel along/over/under –move in different ways
- 'Mountain climbing' with junk/resources
- Following a map identifying key points/symbols, orienteering
- Finding right sized objects that fit tubes/funnels
- Shape sorters, puzzles, questions and support from practitioner
- Matching keys to locks (shape matching/super heroes)
- Transporting using guttering/pipes
- Ramps for cars
- Waterwall – cause/effect/task organising
- Using tweezers to organise and post small objects into bottles or egg boxes
- Heuristic play
- Colour coded wellies
- Parent and family engagement
- Matching bottles with lids (colour/size)
- Mixing paints
- How to pull stuck parsnips out of the vegetable garden
- Moving resources around the garden, navigating obstacles, children in trolleys
- Make shapes with ropes (children hand must stay 'glued' to rope) try with eyes shut too!
- Cross a 'river;' with various resources
- How to attach/join junk materials together
- Numbered plates or cups (put right number of items on each plate/in each cup) Link items to children interests.
- Sensory box numbers and putting in order
- Teddy bear counting, colour grouping
- Wool spiders web, to hold up large balls
- Building a den together (eg bear cave)
- Windy day play accessories
- 'Protect the egg'- challenge to roll a raw egg down a ramp without breaking it.
- Finding a way to do a mud kitchen in a very small space.
- Counting with pebbles found in the garden.
- Weighing scales in a pit of stones
- Threading objects
- Looking for shapes in the environment

- Balance (along rope, uneven logs, plank on log see-saw etc like an 'assault course'= more challenging)
- Stepping 'stones' using logs
- Den making resources
- Fixings – velcro, bungees
- Non-standard measure (eg measure a child, how tall are they in xxxxxx unit of measure)
- Measure items with string, then sort the lengths etc.
- Carpet tile 'dominoes' made with a range of resources
- Staff wellies
- Balance/weight workshop, different types of balances scales (eg suspended or plank/log)
- Pattern and number with natural materials
- Chalk board paint on logs etc for mark making
- Leave some long grass and prickly plants for children to learn from.
- Use boundaries more effectively for fixing dens, painting, chalk boards, instruments etc.
- Involve children in making changes, eg Paint a sun shade/sheet, build a sand pit.

- Rope – old mooring lines as good
- Child minders can work together to provide some activities and resources.
- Learn how to tie knots.
- Follow a trail - get children to 'take a line for a walk', use chalkboards as cues to highlight features along the route.
- Make dens inspired by the weather (shady, rainy day waterproof, cosy cold weather)
- Explore outdoors in all weather.
- Mud kitchen
- Replace some plastic toys with more natural/wooden items.
- Google 'project wild thing'
- More wheel barrows for transporting
- Make paint brushes from leaves and branches.
- Make 'paint' with mud, berries etc
- Children working in team, more collaboration

..and a quote...

“The workshop was very useful as it gave me some fantastic ideas how to develop children’s problem solving skills, and, for example, how to promote positional language”

Have fun outdoors!

