



A GUIDE TO NATURE PLAY AT CLAPHAM PRIMARY

*“The more risks you allow
children to take, the better
they learn to look after
themselves.”*

ROALD DAHL

INTRODUCTION



A natural playspace is a designated area that emulates a natural setting to provide a place where children can engage in creative, unstructured play with natural elements.

Natural playspaces are:-

- dominated by natural elements, vegetation, water, sand, dirt, mud flowers, insects and wildlife and which mirrors the local landscape
- full of sensory stimulation
- alive, diverse and changing all the time
- accessible at all times and in all weather
- places that promote a sense of wonder, ignite the imagination and encourage curiosity and creativity
- opportunities for open-ended interactions, risk taking and spontaneous play
- visually appealing and inspiring

RISK & PLAY IN LEARNING

Children need to take risks in order to develop cognitive, social, physical and psychological competencies.

Educators are responsible for providing children with opportunities to develop life competencies such as common sense, problem solving and confidence.

The adult role is to remove or point out the hazards that children do not see, to make the play and learning opportunities as safe as necessary, not as safe as possible.

If we allow children
to explore
risky play
like jumping across logs
and climbing trees
they will show us just how
capable and 
competent
they can truly be.

ZONES

INSIDE Security Fence:

Teepee building area west side of sports shed

Mud kitchen area east side of sports shed

Sensory herb garden / river bed

OUTSIDE Security Fence:

Mining area west side of shelter shed

Bark chip mounds

AREAS OUT-OF-BOUNDS:

Banks on either ovals

Long jump pit

Behind shelter shed

Social Space / Gardens

Main Oval and Soccer Pitch

Cricket Pitch



MATERIALS & RESOURCES

FIXED Structures:

Teepee poles

Pods / Huts

Storage boxes

Mud Kitchens

NB: bowls etc will be chained to
mud kitchen bases



LOOSE Parts:

Teepee building sticks (colour coded - to stay in teepee area)

Wooden cutoffs & short sticks

Rocks

Rope

Hessian

Tools (shovels, spades, rakes)

Kitchen utensils

Buckets





RULES



Only build structures in Nature Play areas – do not build against fences or shed

Only use materials provided – do not bring items from home OR use branches from other trees/bushes

Keep materials in designated zones ie: teepee sticks kept in teepee area

Share materials – do not take from other groups

Make sure structures are stable


Do not climb on top of structures

Use tools carefully – be aware of others near you

Identify hazards for others

Do not use drinking troughs – use pump or tap to collect water

Clean up after yourself – store unused materials so others can use them

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a wood surface, showing concentric growth rings and a prominent knot. Two thin white horizontal lines are positioned near the top and bottom edges of the image.

The outdoor play and learning environment needs to be an environment where inspiration and creativity can take root, where curiosity and spontaneity can be realized, and where risk and failures can be experienced.