

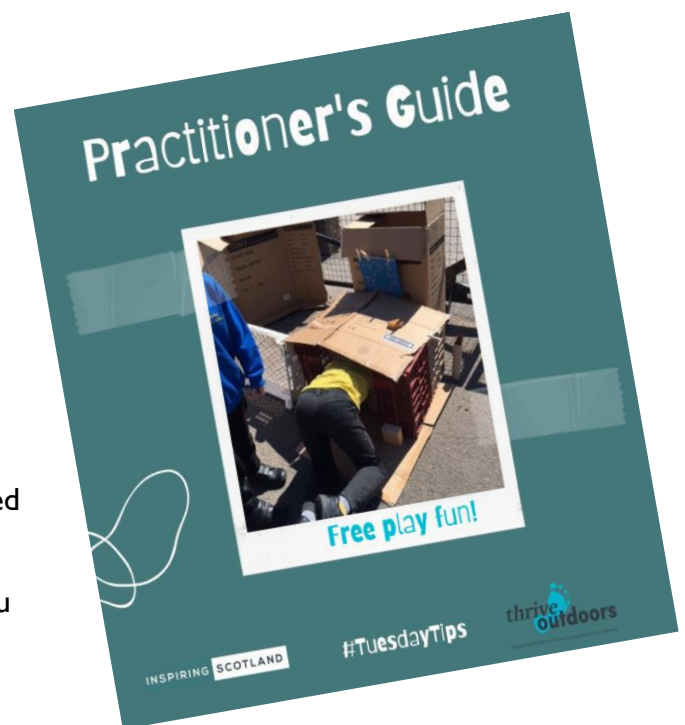
**A Practitioner's Guide
to
OUTDOOR PLAY BASED LEARNING
Play in Primary School
Guest Blogger: Natalie Campbell,
Education and Outreach manager
& Forest school manager at Earthtime**

Top Tips for Incorporating Play in Primary Schools!

Free play at any age or stage allows for opportunities to be creative, test and develop problem solving skills, build relationships and be active. As a adult we can facilitate all these benefits by allowing free play to be, at least, a portion of the outdoor learning time.

When incorporating free play into outdoor sessions it is important to observe the learning that takes place rather than having pre-defined learning objectives. Be prepared to observe learning across curriculum areas and not focused purely on health and wellbeing.

By including some basic, low cost resources you can extend the play and learning opportunities. Here are some of our top hints and tips!



1. Free play with loose parts!

Loose Parts - are a fantastic way to introduce free play opportunities. Allocate an area of the playground for loose parts to avoid it spreading over a wide area and ensure you have adequate storage that is accessible.

Planks, milk crates, boxes, tarpaulins, pallets, tree rounds, pipes, guttering – and anything else you can salvage. These open ended play items are a great STEM resource and also great for group work between different ages. i.e. upper stages classes working with early years.

Upper stages classes can be made responsible for checking the items for damage, taking these out and flagging up anything that needs replaced. They can help develop safety rules for using the loose parts equipment and working with other classes to implement these.

2. Tool Use

Tool Use - incorporate wood tinkering into your loose parts to extend to model making and technologies. Having a boxed kit containing short, stubby hammers, nails, bottle tops & jam jar lids can make this easy to store and take out with wooden off cuts or pieces of plank.

Have a designated tool use area with bench, if possible, or tarpaulin on the ground and establish safe use, i.e. tools only used in designated area.

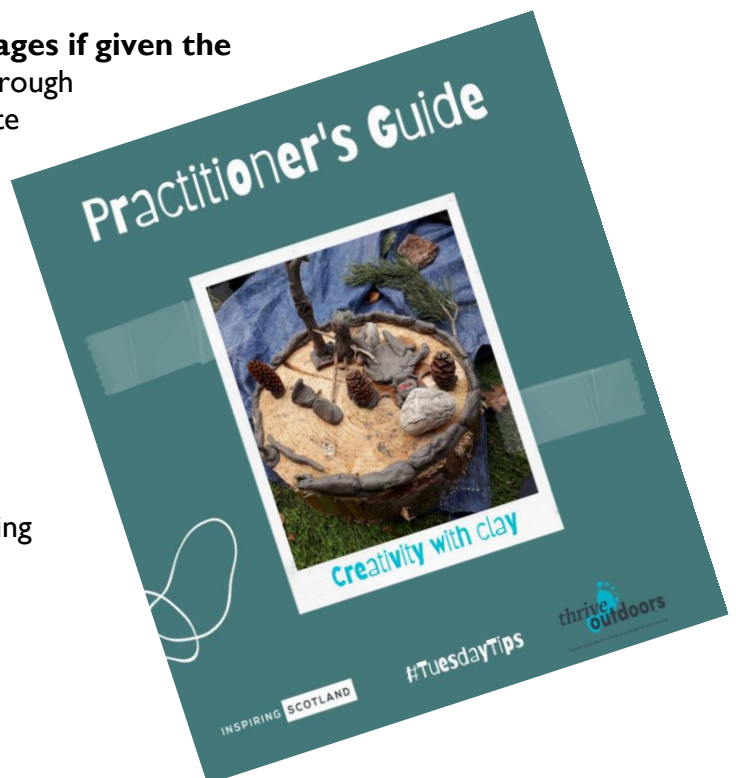


3. Getting messy in the Mud Kitchen

Mud Kitchen – this will be used by all stages if given the opportunity. You can extend the learning through introducing measuring jugs and cylinders. Write recipes on a chalk or blackboard to follow to encourage measuring, you can include natural items in the recipes to introduce flora identification.

Set challenges for example build the highest mud tower, make mud flow or make a mud brick (you may need straw as well).

Progress to natural dyes using mud, berries, grasses to paint on a sheet tied between two trees/fence posts. This links to our past, learning for sustainability and creativity.



4. Getting Creative with Clay

Clay – air drying clay leads to unlimited creativity. Use natural materials in the clay and let imaginations run wild!

5. Den Building

Den building – by providing tarpaulins/sheets, ropes and pegs in a boxed, accessible kit the opportunity is there for huge amounts of team work, problem solving and also extends imaginative play into allocating dens a purpose in more complicated role play.

Use this interest as an opportunity to teach some basic knot tying.



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Useful Links

Download our Loose Parts Play toolkit:

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/publication/loose-parts-play-toolkit/>

Our handy hints and tips on #outdoorplay

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/thrive/>