

Policy reference: 28

At I Can Day Nurseries, we believe strongly in children having outdoor learning opportunities as part of their daily experience at the nursery. We believe that our indoor and outdoor environments are viewed as one space and seen as equals, in which children can learn. This policy explains how we will ensure children are kept safe whilst they are outside, how we will ensure they are protected from both the sun and the cold weather and our expectations to ensure children use the outdoor environment on a daily basis.

Each of the six rooms in the nursery has its own fenced outdoor learning environment. These areas all have shelters on them that provide UV protection and help to shelter children from the rain. We have a large concrete playground that is used by the 2-4 year olds to help develop their gross motor skills. We also have a large fenced grass area that is accessible to all children.

Safety

In order to ensure the outdoor environments are safe for the children an 'Outdoor hazard sheet' is produced for each of the fenced outdoor areas, the playground and the grass area. The hazards sheets are specific to each of the different areas and take into account the different equipment in each area.

Every morning and afternoon, it is the room seniors' responsibility to ensure someone in each room has completed the outdoor safety check for their specific fenced area. If, whilst completing the checks, staff come across a hazard, they must report it to the manager/deputy manager immediately so that it can be dealt with before the outdoor area can be used.

Every morning, the manager/deputy manager will complete the hazard sheet for the main playground and grass area. If there are any hazards, they will inform all the room seniors about this.

The nursery has a range of bikes and scooters for the children to use. The older children can ride these bikes and scooters on the big playground but must wear a cycle helmet. Children may bring in bikes or scooters from home but must bring in a cycle helmet in order to ride them on the playground. If the playground is wet then bikes and scooters will not be used.

Sun Protection

We strongly believe children and the staff should be protected from the sun whilst they are using the outdoor environment. In order to ensure this happens, we ask parents to provide a named bottle of sun cream and a sun hat for their child. As the sun cream is running out parents will be informed and asked to provide another bottle. Children will not be taken outside when the sun is out unless they have had sun cream applied to all exposed skin and they are wearing a sun hat. Sun cream must be applied 30 minutes before a child goes outside. Therefore, on sunny days, sun cream will be applied as soon as is possible once the child arrives at nursery. A record will be kept by staff, indicating the times sun cream has been applied. If a parent has applied sun cream in the morning before the child arrives at nursery they will be asked to sign the 'Sun cream form' and to indicate the time they applied it. Sun cream should be reapplied every 2 hours. When applying sun cream staff should wear disposable gloves and ensure they use new gloves for each child, in order to limit the risk of spreading infections or triggering allergies.

Staff are advised to apply sun cream to themselves, to wear sun hats and glasses and stay in the shade as much as possible in order to protect themselves from the sun.

Heat Stroke/Heat exhaustion

Babies and young children are in the 'at risk groups' for developing heat stroke/ heat exhaustion in the hot weather.

In order to prevent this, staff must ensure that children:

- have regular access to cold drinks,
- wear their sun hats,
- ensure children have loose clothing on,
- stay in the shade as much as possible,
- avoid being outside in the sun during the hours of 11am-2pm,
- avoid staying out in direct sunlight for longer than 15 minutes,
- If the temperature outside is 30°C or above children will not be allowed outside unless they are in the shade and for no longer than 10 minutes at a time.

Cold and Wet Weather

At I Can Day Nurseries, we believe in allowing children to have access to the outdoor environment in all weathers in order to help develop their understanding of the world around them. Parents are asked to provide suitable waterproof clothing and Wellington boots so that children can access the outdoors when it is/has been raining. In the cold weather, parents must also provide warm clothing and a hat if they wish their child to go outside. If it is raining, wet, snowing or cold outside, children will not be taken out unless they are wearing suitable clothing.

The nursery will provide one waterproof coat for each room so that staff are protected from the rain. Staff are also advised to wear appropriate warm clothing such as a hat, scarf and gloves whilst they are outside.

Hypothermia

Babies and young children can be at risk of developing hypothermia if they get too cold and wet. In order to prevent this, staff must ensure that:

- Children are appropriately dressed for the weather by wearing coats, hats, gloves and scarfs.
- If children say they are feeling too cold, they are brought back inside,
- If children are wet from the rain/snow, they are changed into dry clothes as soon as they go indoors,
- If the temperature outside is below 2°C, children will not be allowed outside unless it is snowing and then for no longer than 10 minutes at a time.

Daily outdoor practice

In order to ensure that all children have access to outdoor learning throughout the day, staff must view their indoor and outdoor environments as one space and ensure that use of the outdoor area is appropriately planned for.

Below is how the nursery will ensure children have continuous access to outdoor learning every day.

- Each room's individual outdoor area should be set up first thing in the morning along with the indoor environment.
- The 'Outdoor hazard sheet' should be completed first thing in the morning whilst the member of staff is setting up the area.
- As soon as breakfast is finished and staffing numbers allow e.g. 2 qualified staff, then children should start to access the outdoor environment – this does not need to be announced but should be a quiet affair where a member of staff takes a few children and then others are allowed to slowly join them.
- Children will have access to their outdoor environment throughout the morning, until they stop for group time/lunch time.
- The same routine will be followed in the afternoon once lunchtime/sleep time is over and will continue until staffing numbers allow.
- The outdoor area should be tidied up at the end of the day and left ready for staff to set up the next day.
- As children will have access to the outdoor area all day **there is no need for a 'playtime'**. This means that staff **will not** take the whole room onto the big playground or grass area at any point during the day, -unless to carry out a specific group activity.
- As staffing numbers allow, groups of children can access the big playground to play with the gross motor toys whilst they are outside.
- The top half of the big playground will be sectioned off for children to ride bikes and scooters (helmets must be worn).
- The bottom half of the playground will be used for children to play with a variety of gross motor toys.
- When staff are outside, they are expected to be interacting and supporting children's development and interests.
- A rota should be available so staff know who is going to be outside on which days. However, staff should be prepared for this to change and ensure they have the appropriate clothing for the weather each day.
- On extremely cold/hot days, the room senior must ensure that staff swap over regularly to ensure no one becomes ill from the weather conditions.

This practice will be followed every day except in extreme weather conditions.