

# Teaching Resources | Teacher Training



## Maths Continuous Provision | Muddy Early Years

BEE GREEN AND ONLY PRINT IF YOU HIVE TO :)

### Preparation and safety

Each season, nature will bring you the resources that you need. However, if you do not have a natural setting or lack certain natural items, try to collect these in advance of your sessions. Make a habit of going out for a walk at weekends – you'll improve your own physical and mental health, which is good for you, and you'll collect your missing items. You can also encourage parents to get collecting through your newsletters! Make your world one big healthy, Muddy community. You will get an idea of the types of resources that you need each season. The only resource that you may need to buy is air-drying clay.

Weather wise, we will provide you with ideas for all types of weather. The only time that we advise you NOT to go outside is on extremely windy days and during thunderstorms. Otherwise, there's no excuses – get yourself out there!

Always risk assess with the children present. As you enter the natural environment, spend 30 seconds talking about the dangers that the weather conditions may present, such as slippery surfaces and hot sun. If possible, offer the children a solution to any issues, such as seeking out a safe, shady area if the sun is too hot. Keep sticks low and only use stones no bigger than the palm of the children's hands. remind them to use feet first then hands when collecting from the floor and wash hands thoroughly after.

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# Muddy Continuous Provision

## What is outdoor continuous provision

Continuous provision are the resources provided in the learning environment for the children to interact with creatively. The idea is that it encourages the children to continue their learning in the absence of an adult. Resources for continuous provision should be carefully selected to ensure that both challenge and support are provided for all children. Often, children don't naturally challenge themselves in a play space unless they find the play interesting and engaging. Continuous provision works best to enhance learning when basic, carefully-planned resources are provided along with specific 'enhancements' (extra bits and bobs!) that are added following the children's interests.

In order to develop children's vocabulary, a chalkboard can be added to each area with relevant words added in order to remind any adults in the setting about what they can discuss with children. For example: combine, squeeze, ladle, scent and tongs could be added to the mud kitchen area.

## Muddy kitchen - lets get cooking!

This is an area of outdoor provision that provides opportunities for children to use utensils and our favourite ingredient, MUD, to role-play kitchen and restaurant activities (or whatever springs to mind!)

The basics for this area include :

- As wide a selection of pots, pans and containers as possible. These can be upcycled and/or sourced from charity shops or jumble sales. Look out for unusual containers, ice cream dishes etc.
- Utensils, such as wooden spoons, tongs and ladles are perfect additions.
- Crockery - be brave and use the real thing as it will enhance the play in the area. Dinner services, cups, mugs and plates are fantastic. Make charity shops your friend or ask parents for donations.
- Resources to mix - Try both wet and dry mud, soil, bark chippings along with a supply of water (Camping bottles with taps are great for this.)
- Chalkboards or pieces of slate and chalks provide opportunities to create shopping lists, recipes and menus.
- Possible enhancements are wide-ranging but could include herbs, lavender, grit, shells, flower petals, leaves, sticks, herbs and spices.
- The addition of 'real' foods often enthuses learners e.g. a few potatoes or onions or oats.

Although it can be tempting to be giddy and add lots and lots of resources to the mud kitchen, often 'less is more!' Resources are best kept fairly minimal and supplemented by carefully selected enhancements.

Storage is important. Think carefully about how resources can be stored to ensure the children can access them but that they can also tidy away independently. Hooks, wooden boxes and upcycled furniture is perfect for the job.

Just a quick word on hygiene - it is important to encourage handwashing in either a large water butt along with soap or a bucket of frequently changed bucket of water.

In order to enhance learning, this area will work best if time is invested by adults in modelling how the area can be used giving children ideas and skills that they can use independently.



Did you know  
that paid  
subscriptions  
include  
accredited  
training?

'A little dirt never hurt'

# Muddy Continuous Provision

## Dig it!

Children love to dig! It improves and develops core stability and is great fun!

If possible, provide a digging area. This could be a soil-filled raised bed or a grit pit. Provide small spades, forks and trowels to 'get stuck in!' If close adult supervision is available, then the use of full-size gardening spades and forks is always a hit!

Additional resources could include recycled containers e.g. metal or wooden utensils. Cardboard recycled tubes are a good addition to this area. These can be found at carpet suppliers (they skip them!)

Seasonal enhancements to this area could include 'gardening and growing'. For example, the addition of old plant pots, seeds and compost can inspire children and provide lots of learning opportunities around 'The world'. This works especially well alongside more structured teaching and learning around growing and planting.

Links can be made with texts such as 'Jack and the beanstalk' and 'Jasper's beanstalk'

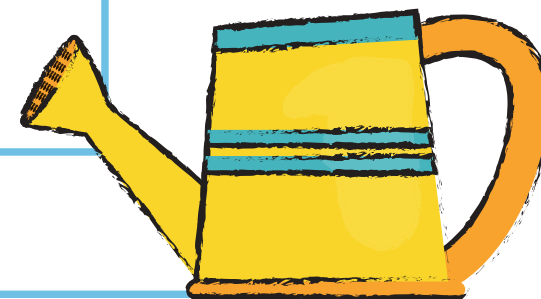
## Make it!

If the use of tools and resources is modelled carefully by adults, then a wood-working area can provide superb opportunities to design and make and develop fine motor skills.

Basic pieces of wood (possibly chopped up palettes) screws, nails and lightweight hammers, screwdrivers and sandpaper are super resources for children.

Enhancements in this area could include tape measures, metre sticks and wooden rulers.

Children can be encouraged to 'finish' their creations by adding chalk paint.



'When you are  
curious you find lots  
of interesting things  
to do'  
Walt Disney

## Let's build it!

Outdoor construction can provide fantastic opportunities for learning:

Complicated resources aren't needed. Here are a few ideas:

- Cardboard boxes - the bigger the better!
  - Upcycled crates and containers
  - Palettes of different sizes
  - Selection of large pieces of fabric
  - Specific enhancements could include upcycled tyres, coins, branches & leaves and domestic resources e.g. mugs and plates.
- Children will need adult intervention to inspire and provide imaginative ideas e.g. making a bus, a hot tub, McDonald's drive through.

# Muddy Continuous Provision

## Water water everywhere

A thoughtfully-resourced water area is a fantastic addition to outdoor continuous provision, providing a wealth of learning opportunities as well as marvellous outdoor fun. Basic water provision can be set up quite simply, with a couple of large buckets or trugs and some containers along with planned extra enhancements. In order to provide challenging learning for all children in the setting, the choice of resources needs to be considered carefully, for example, a range of containers. Include some narrow-necked ones, funnels and sieves. Check out charity shops for upcycled interesting finds e.g. watering cans, teapots, funnels, spoons and bottles. If possible, try to source some wood/bamboo tubes and troughs that children can use to make waterways and rivers. Natural enhancements could include shells, pebbles and stones, bubbles and stirring sticks.

- Investigate floating and sinking - try to encourage the children to make predictions and also sort their results too.
- Natural materials can be provided as a stimulus for boats and rafts, using leaves, sticks, shells etc
- Wet mark making - make footprints on dry surfaces, try out watering cans to make patterns and drips, use upcycled brushes of various sizes to mark make on dry surfaces.

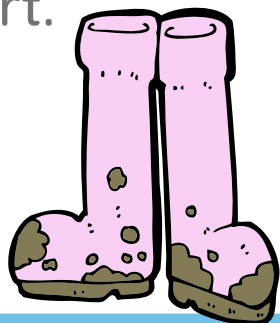
The addition of slow-running water can really enhance water provision. A simple hosepipe can provide a wealth of learning. Children are able to fill, pour and manipulate the water!

Have a go at providing a Muddy zone - this can be done by regularly adding water to a suitable part of the outdoor area. Children can fill containers with mud, make potions and splash around!

Make a simple wildlife pond using a recycled bucket or container. Add small stones and water plants. This would make a great home for frogspawn and provide the opportunity for children to observe changes in a more natural and 'tadpole friendly' environment!



Of all the paths  
you take in life :  
make sure a  
few of them are  
Dirt.



## Life's a beach

Sand is an invaluable learning resources that can be enhanced in many different ways. Again, a range of basic resources should be provided

in order to develop children's skills. e.g. wide-necked and small-necked containers and a selection of upcycled spoons, scoops and trowels. Basic mark making tools should be included e.g. sticks, stones and cones. Both wet and dry sand can be provided as each has its own individual features e.g. wet sand is good for modelling or making use of moulds whilst dry sand fills and pours well.

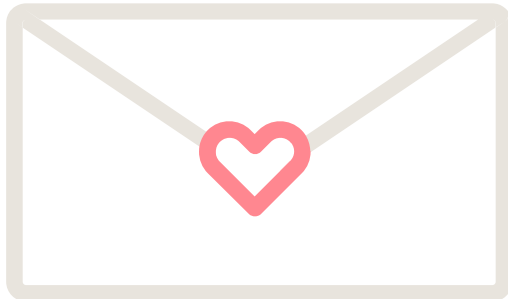
Sand can be poured onto a shallow tray and used as a base for a storytelling tray. Also a shallow layer of sand is perfect for mark-making with sticks. This can be basic marks or letter formation and name writing opportunities

A few ideas for enhancements and additions to basic sand play resources. Remember the most successful enhancements follow the interests of the children.

- Natural loose parts, like leaves, stones, sticks, shells, and flower petals to make patterns and add to imaginative play
- Resources to encourage mark making and writing e.g. sticks, lolly sticks, and cones to add texture
- Mark making and writing resources, such as slates and mini chalkboards with chalk so Muddy menus can be written and lists made
- Upcycled baking equipment e.g. cake tins and muffin trays
- Upcycled weighing scales
- Soil, compost, coffee grounds, grit and, of course, mud!
- Natural treasure to make a treasure hunt e.g. tiny shells, flowers or pebbles
- Plant pots and seeds

## Fun Activities for Home

**Everything  
you don't  
know is  
something  
you can  
learn.**



### **How can you provide outdoor learning opportunities for your child?**

- Make your own simple mud kitchen. Provide a few spoons of different sizes, a couple of old pans and dishes and let the cooking begin! Give your child an area where mud can be enjoyed! Coffee grounds are great for mixing too (often provided free of charge by the big coffee shop chains). Add extra bits - remember rose petal perfume and mud pies from your own childhood??
- Water play - whatever the weather: find a bucket or two, some containers, a hose pipe and you're away! Have a go at experimenting with floating and sinking, washing things and painting with water using paint brushes on dry surfaces.
- Don't forget to splash in puddles, squelch in mud and scrumple in leaves!
- When you are out and about, observe and talk about what you can see. Children are delighted in birds, animals and nature all around them.

**'The greatest legacy we can  
leave our children is happy  
memories'**