

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE

The last few months have been challenging and unpredictable for many early years settings. Whilst some have remained open throughout, others are just starting to welcome children back. To enable more children to return, a key focus and consideration is how to enhance outdoor space and create more outdoor learning opportunities.

As well as the benefits already acknowledged by practitioners relating to physical activity and health and wellbeing, it would also appear that COVID-19 spreads less easily in outdoor environments,, making best use of this space is essential.

Whatever size and shape of outdoor space you have, there is no question that having some groups outside will allow for an easier flow of movement in the internal space, and easier social distancing between 'bubble groups'.

Since launching our outdoor furniture range last year, we've spent a lot of time developing outdoor products and planning outdoor spaces. We wanted to share some ideas, thoughts and suggestions for enhancing your outdoor space and providing children with opportunities to socialise and rekindle friendships after time away from the familiar surroundings of their nursery.

Flexibility is vital to the success of any outdoor space and we would suggest that products are freestanding so that you can reconfigure your space as and when required, to best meet the changing needs of your setting.

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All products in the Millhouse Outdoors range are manufactured in the UK from premium quality Scandinavian Redwood, which is specially treated and guaranteed for 10 years.

Create a space

Whether it's an additional teaching space, or you want to create a place for children to relax and 'chill out', dividing space is easily achieved and has the added benefit of helping children to recognise specific areas. Consider the following....

- **Movable Fence Panels** - sturdy, flexible and easy to configure as required. The freestanding design ensures versatility and multiple panels can be butted together to create the required layout.
- **Outdoor Tables and Chairs** can be used for crafts, snack/lunch time and creating activity zones. Millhouse Outdoor furniture is specially treated to offer protection against the elements, therefore the table tops are easy to clean after use using soap and water, then simply leave to dry.
- The **Indoor/Outdoor Den**, is a creative way to define space and nurture imagination. The den can be decorated to match a particular theme and is easy to move indoors for storage after use.

Let's Get Physical

A selection of active play items will help keep children moving and develop core muscle strength. We'd suggest three flexible pieces: Balance Beam, Balance See Saw and Floor Ladder. Affordable, fun and portable, these outdoor active play products will not only have a positive impact on physical development, but are great for promoting problem solving and social skills. Why not create an obstacle course?

Missing our Friends

Many children returning to nursery will have missed their daily interactions with staff and peers, not to mention the nurturing and exploratory environment they enjoy in your setting. There are a variety of products which provide lots of opportunities for imaginative play and the sharing of experiences. We would recommend Market Stalls, Messy Play Tables and Busy Benches. All great resources to use with loose parts, small world and for role play, providing lots of opportunities for questions and shared conversations.

The Millhouse Outdoors range is available from [Early Years Direct](#). To view the full range online click [here](#).



We're always happy to help with product advice and space planning. We offer free room planning for both indoor and outdoor spaces (can be done virtually).